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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

JUNE 15, 1923 NO. 134

FEATURE STORY
THE WHISPERING ROOM
by Frederick C. Davis

A NEW SERIAL
—THE MYSTERY— OF THE CALVIN WILL
by Beulah Poynt-

HAP HADLEY

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Watch For the Next Number

IN keeping with our policy to give our readers none but the very best, we have secured a feature novelette from Charles Fulton Oursler that will please everybody. It is a mystery story. This engaging author's best work consists of describing puzzling mysteries. The title is

"ONE CLUE MISSING"

It grips your interest right at the start, and this interest grows with each succeeding paragraph. You simply cannot stop reading it until the end, when the mystery is explained. This is the type of novelette that everybody likes and we feel sure it will satisfy you.

Watch for the short stories. There will be a number dealing with detective adventures, containing startling plots and lively work by the police force in the exposure of crimes and the detection of criminals. We cannot urge you too strongly to read these bright, sparkling sketches, for every one was written by the best of story tellers.

Carl H. Getz will have one of his unique articles in this number. Most of our readers know what an interesting writer he is. The subject he handles is rather odd and is entitled "Crime Detection in Egypt." This author can certainly shed considerable light on the methods employed by crooks in their nefarious undertakings, and the next one will be particularly enlightening in this respect.

The second part of Beulah Poynter's story, "The Mystery of the Calvin Will," will be issued, and we have a number of short articles of unusual merit. They cover a great many unusual subjects. Not a dull line in any of them.

Don't miss getting a copy of the next number if you like good detective fiction.

THE EDITOR.

THE WHISPERING ROOM

by Frederick C. Davis

CHAPTER ONE

BARGAINS BETWEEN CROOKS

NICK SUTTON'S trade led him into other men's hip pockets. He had lifted pocketbooks. At times, too, he had been eminently successful. Only the week past he had relieved a fleshy man of a wallet inside which he had found stamped later the name of a United States senator. He had not yet met detection, and he was not counting on it. The man who won't admit defeat is never beaten—that was his attitude. And his motto had brought him successfully through life to date.

Nick Sutton saw a man approach a window in which a wireless demonstrator was fussing with radio instruments, and in front of which a crowd had accumulated. The man seemed to be an uncommonly good try. So Sutton left the curb and placed himself directly in behind his intended victim.

His nimble fingers lightly touched the hip pocket of the man. It needed no second touch of his sensitive fingertips to know that he carried a wallet in his pocket, and that the wallet was bulging.

The pickpocket's hands went forward unnoticeably and lifted the skirt of his victim's coat. His fingers gently opened the mouth of the pocket, and as two of them kept the gap wide others of the same hand reached down and gingerly gripped the leather. With skillful quickness the wallet was dexterously removed from the pocket and pushed under his own coat as he turned to leave.

But the expression of satisfaction on his face suddenly dropped off. Sudden blankness filled him; then, with a shock, fear, he gasped. His victim whirled, darted a hand out toward him, and at the same time spoke to the man next to him, who was seemingly his companion. As the hand gripped Sutton's shoulder every drop of color fled from his face.

Two pairs of hard gray eyes glared at him. He was caught! Detected in the very act of lifting a wallet! He went suddenly weak and sick.

"Wha—what y' want?" he gulped, peering blankly.

"We caught you that time, boy!"

Sutton gulped again. "Wha—what y' talkin' abo——"

"Stop that! You're not goofing us, son! Come on, step along!"

Sutton was pushed to the curb. He looked with blank appeal into the cold gray eyes of the two men who had turned on him. "C-call the wagon," he muttered. "Get it over quick!"

His captors laughed queerly. Then the first addressed the second in a foreign tongue, which was as Arabic to Sutton. The other replied in thick, guttural tones. They seemed to have settled a point of controversy.

"We've got you cold," the first said to Sutton.

"Aw, why prolong the agony?"

"Son, you've got us wrong. We're not detectives. We won't even call the cops." He looked around cautiously. "This is no place to talk. Come with us. We've got a proposition to make to you, son. If you'll listen you'll hear something to your interest."

Sutton blinked in bewilderment. "Y-yes, sir," he mumbled.

"Then keep quiet until we can get somewhere where we can talk."

Sutton's jaw clamped.

The older man called a cab and bundled Sutton into it. The vehicle rumbled away with the dip sandwiched between the two, silent and brooding. Now and then they spoke in gruff and intelligible syllables. Sutton listened and kept discreetly still.

Soon the ride ended. The captive was pushed and pulled from the cab with vise-like grips on his arms. They stopped before an apartment-house and hurried up carpeted stairs to the second floor. The elder man opened a door with a key and directed Sutton inside.

"Sit down," he commanded.

The elder of the men placed himself across the table beside which Sutton sat, while the youngest one stood off to one side.

"First," the spokesman said, "please hand over my wallet."

He did as commanded. The other took it and placed it between them on the table, grinning the while in a peculiar leering and condescending manner.

"My brother and I," he purred, "could easily send you to the penitentiary for stealing that pocketbook, couldn't we?"

"Y-yes."

"We are two witnesses that you took it. That's very bad for you, isn't it?"

"Y-yes."

"Ever been in jail?"

"N-no."

The speaker's face reddened. "Then let me tell you it's hell! It's damnable! It's worse than the agonies of torture! It's——"

Sutton stared at him, wide-eyed. The other recovered himself with a jerk.

"It—it's something you don't want to experience," he ended breathlessly. "Now, listen," he quickly continued. "I can easily put you behind bars for stealing my pocketbook. Now, if you will agree to a very simple proposition I'll allow you to go scot-free."

Sutton brightened. "What is it?" he asked hopefully.

"The first thing is that you'll agree not to try to relieve any more men of their wallets until I give you permission—which should be in about ten days. The rest is that you are to come here to-night at one o'clock, and every night at one o'clock, until I give you leave to stop, and read aloud a little composition I have written. Is it agreeable?"

Sutton blinked. "Is that *all?*"

The other smiled mirthlessly. "That's all."

"You mean that you'll let me go if I'll come here every night and read something you wrote?"

"Exactly."

Sutton wondered. "There's a catch in this somewhere," he thought. "Something's rotten in Denmark." Aloud he said: "And what if I don't agree?"

"You'll simply spend years in jail for stealing my wallet. But if you agree I'll pay you five dollars every time you read what I have written."

"Just what have I got to read?"

"First," the other countered, "do you accept the proposition?"

"Not until I see what you have written."

"No." The man arose, disgust on his features. "Then I shall be obliged to send you to jail."

"Here!" Sutton gasped and motioned him back. "Wait. Where do I read that thing?"

"Here in this room. No one else will be here except my brother."

"Nobody else?"

"Nobody else."

"All right. I'll do it."

The man nodded briefly; he extracted pen and paper from a drawer in his desk. When he finished he pushed the pad toward Sutton.

"Sign that," he ordered.

Sept. 30.

For the sum of five dollars to me in hand paid for each reading, I agree to read a short composition each night at one o'clock, as requested, in this room. I accept all responsibilities for any result of the reading of the manuscript.

(Signed) _____ _____

Sutton mechanically dipped the pen and signed his name. The other detached the sheet and folded it in a satisfied manner.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"My name is Mittleback, and the other gentleman is my brother."

"All right. Now, what am I going to read?"

The other produced from his pocket several folded sheets of paper. He handed them over without much ado.

"You have only to read this. You are to read it once, then repeat it. Come with me."

Sutton arose. The elder Mittleback led him to a position directly over a large flower fashioned in the rug. Mittleback seemed very anxious that Sutton's position be exact. Sutton, thus stationed, stood two feet from the wall, facing it, directly in front of a large picture which hung level with his face.

Mittleback ordered: "Now, read."

Sutton read: "Up. Up, now. Up. Up. Up. Up, now. Up easily. No noise. No noise. Into the hall. Into the hall, next. Down. Down. Down. Front. Down, front. It is in the kitchen. In——"

"No, no!" the other exclaimed quickly. "You read too fast! Your voice is too high! Read more slowly—lower your voice!"

Somewhat bewildered, Sutton began again, more slowly:

"Up.—Up, now.—Up.—Up.—Up.—Up, now.—Up, easily." And continued over what he had read before, and over an additional part very similar and just apparently as senseless. Finally he ended.

"That was better!" Mittleback exclaimed. "Now read it again."

Mechanically he read the crazy thing again. When he had finished the second time the younger Mittleback arose, and the elder dove one hand into his pocket.

"That was good. You will come here tonight at one o'clock. You will read what you have read this afternoon. Meanwhile you will say absolutely nothing about this. Remember—if you disobey us I will throw you into jail!"

Sutton nodded. "I'll remember that, all right!"

"All right. Go, now. Here's five dollars for you. Be back at one o'clock."

Sutton passed outside and walked down the stairs alone. He heard the door close when he was halfway down. He paused, puzzled. Then he slowly and silently reclimbed the stair. He crept up the hall and stopped just outside the door of the Mittlebacks. He heard voices:

"We'll get him!" a hissing voice said. "We'll get him. He'll be in a worse hell than——"

"Damn him!"

Then the voices lowered to rumblings, and Sutton could hear no more until "You're a fool—a fool! It's lucky there's two of us. Yes, we can send him to the chair if he blabs, but we have got to keep still. You're a blasted idiot, fighting all the time like this!"

Sutton drew away, fearful of detection. As he tiptoed down the steps again he shook his bewildered head sadly.

"Something's wrong here!" he meditated. "There's a catch in it somewhere!"

CHAPTER TWO

ONE O'CLOCK

NICK SUTTON puzzled through the rest of the day. He failed utterly to conceive of how it could be worth five dollars to any man for him to stand two feet from a wall at one o'clock in the night and recite a nonsensical thing which he could get neither head nor tail from.

Sutton turned in at nine o'clock, with the alarm clock set for twelve. He roomed in a cheap hotel of a none-too-respectable part of town. As he tossed in his bed he pondered over the conversation he had heard when he had slipped back to the Mittleback door. Those men were evidently playing against some one, and there was no love lost between them, either. The elder Mittleback seemed to think that jail was little short of the infernal regions.

It seemed but a moment later that he was awakened by the clanging of the alarm-clock. He dressed quickly and stepped outside. He stopped at a lunch-wagon and munched a sandwich as he made his way toward the Mittleback rooms. He reached them before one o'clock. With noiseless steps he toed up the stair and knocked.

The younger Mittleback stuck his head through the opened door and peered at Sutton. "So it's you," he said. "You're on time."

"All right," Sutton said as he entered. "Where's that crazy paper?"

"You must wait. We are not ready yet."

Sutton glanced at his watch. "Five minutes to one. Does it have to be so all-fired accurate as that?"

"Do what you agreed to do!" the other snapped. "You're to ask no questions!"

Sutton subsided. Mittleback the younger sat in a chair opposite him, staring out the window. For a long time neither spoke. Mittleback's eyes kept continually out that window, staring into the darkness beyond.

Sutton became uneasy. "Say," he said, "it's after one."

"Wait," the other said impatiently. "We must wait."

"Oh, all right."

Minutes dragged past as Mittleback stared out the window into the black night. Nothing could be seen outside but blackness. He waited impatiently. Minutes crawled sluggishly by.

He glanced at his watch again. One-twenty! "Say!" he ejaculated. "I agreed to read that thing at one o'clock. One o'clock is one o'clock, not one-twenty! What's the delay?"

The other started forward in his chair and stared out the window intently. Sutton's eyes followed his. He caught a gleam of light which sprang from the darkness in the distance. The light flashed some distance away, a spot of whiteness in the darkness of the night. It gleamed once—twice—again. Then the eye of light was swallowed in the maw of blackness and did not show again.

"All right," Mittleback said relievedly. "You may read now."

He handed Sutton the folded sheets of paper, then led Sutton to the identical spot on which he had read the papers that afternoon. Sutton stood on the same flower in the carpet facing the same wall and the same seascape hanging in front of him.

"When I raise my hand," Mittleback ordered, going back to the table, "begin. On no occasion speak to me. Read right through, then repeat. Do not make a noise; do not cough, do not sneeze. If you do you spoil everything, and we turn you over to the police!"

Sutton nodded in a bewildered fashion. Mittleback seated himself at the table. He raised his hand—the signal for Sutton to begin reading.

His voice lowered; speaking slowly and distinctly, Sutton began:

"Up. Up, now.—Up.—Up.—Up.—Up, now.—Up easily.—No—noise.—No—noise.—Into—the—hall.—Into—the—hall—next. Down.—Down.—Front.—Down—Front.—It is—in—the—kitchen.—In—the—kitchen.

"In the—kitchen. By the—cabinet. In the—kitchen—by the cabinet. Go to it. Go to it. Go—to—it. It is—hanging—right side. It is hanging—right side. Take it. Take it now. Now go back. Go back.

Back with it. Up. Go up. Up again. Up again. Now in the—hall. In the hall. Down. Down. Third. Third door. Third door.

"Open it. Open it. No noise. No noise. See? See? On the bed. See, on the bed. There!—There! Raise it! Raise it! Now down! Down, quickly! Down, quickly! Leave it. Leave it. Now, back, quickly. Back. Back. Just as you—were. Quiet, now. Quiet. Easy. Easy.

"No remembrance. No remembrance. Easy. Easy. Easy."

Sutton finished his first reading. Mittleback nodded, a signal for him to repeat.

Sutton began again, "Up.—Up, now," and continued slowly and solemnly until he had read the entire manuscript again. Then he paused and looked again toward Mittleback. Mittleback was again staring out the window into the blackness. Then enigmatically he moved the table lamp from one end of the table to the other. Then he peered again out into the darkness. Seemingly reassured, he turned to Sutton.

"For another five dollars," he said, "will you read it twice more?"

"See here," Sutton frowned, "I don't know what I'm getting into. This is all damned craziness. Signal lights through the night and idiotic messages. It's too blasted crazy, I tell you!"

"For another five dollars," Mittleback purred, "will you do it again?"

"What if I don't?"

"You'll see the inside of a jail!"

"My testimony is as good as yours!"

"You forget! There are two of us and only one of you."

"You've got a lot to explain!"

"You still forget—there are two of us and only one of you."

"You damned idiots!" Sutton growled.

"You'll read it again for five additional dollars?"

"Aw, might as well."

He began again: "Up.—Up, now." He read steadily and finished the first reading. Then, at a signal from Mittleback, he began his fourth rendering of that senseless string of words.

Halfway through he suddenly sneezed. Instantly Mittleback made a quick movement under the table and jumped to his feet in a frenzy. He shook his clenched fist angrily at Sutton.

"Idiot! Simpleton! Fool! Didn't I tell you not to sneeze? Didn't I tell you? You want to ruin everything! Fool! Imbecile! Idiot!"

"Stop that!" Sutton growled. "Cut out those names!"

Mittleback disregarded him; he went to the window and pulled down the shade, then immediately let it roll up again. He peered out into the darkness for a moment, then turned again to Sutton.

"Go on," he ordered grudgingly. "Read on."

Sutton read on. When he finished Mittleback rolled a piece of currency into his hand.

"All right. You may go. Here's the ten dollars."

A telephone, somewhere in the hall, rang.

Mittleback quickly stepped outside, keeping the door wide. Sutton listened intently and caught Mittleback's end of the conversation.

"Good! Good! Already? After only one n——! Good! Good!"

Sutton, on a sudden suspicion, stepped quickly to the spot where he had stood for the reading. He quickly moved the seascape aside.

"I thought so!" he ejaculated.

Behind the picture a circular object hung—the transmitting end of a dictaphone!

He stepped quickly away as Mittleback re-entered. He bid a hasty good-night and departed. At the bottom of the stair he paused.

"Crazy reading," he mused. "Lights. Dictaphones. Now I *know* something's wrong!"

CHAPTER THREE

REVELATIONS

AT eleven o'clock the next morning Sutton walked into the restaurant where he usually ate his breakfast, richer by fif-

teen dollars than he had been the morning previous. It *was* a strange business he had fallen into!

As he ate his customary hot cakes and coffee he began reading a morning paper. His eyes scanned the headlines. A screamer stretched across the top of the page:

"MURDER IN DETECTIVE TULLY'S HOME!"

"Hullo!" Sutton said to himself. "So Tully has run into something, eh?"

Tully was until recently the city's leading detective. Crooks feared and hated him. He was shrewd and relentless in his pursuit of offenders of the law. About six months previous Tully had suffered a complete nervous breakdown from overwork culminating with a particularly hard and nerve-racking case. Detectives are not supposed to have nerves, but after years of hard work, during which period Tully through his over-conscientious sense of duty had refused to take a much needed vacation and rest because his chief had once befriended him years before when he was sorely in need of financial help to save his home, he would not "lay down" on the job. He suffered the usual consequences and was now confined to his home, where he had been for the past six months.

Sutton read the following article concerning this detective with quickening interest:

"Ned Brown, chauffeur of Detective Thomas Tully, was murdered last night in Detective Tully's home. Brown was killed while he slept at the hands of some one unknown.

"Detective Tully is convalescing from a nervous breakdown suffered seven months ago, and is unable to take the case himself. Early this morning he learned of the crime. The best men of the force were immediately put on the case by the chief of detectives.

"The detectives are unanimous in their opinion that the murder was committed by some one inside the house. The windows and doors of the Tully house are all securely safeguarded by the most reliable burglar alarms, and these were found in excellent working order this morning, and had not been sounded last night. The crime must have been committed by some one in the home.

"The only persons who habitually stay inside the house overnight are Detective Tully, Mrs. Tully and their little boy Dick, their cook, a colored woman, and the dead man.

"The chauffeur had quarters in the house because he was a comrade of Tully's, having been employed with the detective in several well-known cases, and twice having saved the detective's life. Tully's condition has been rendered somewhat worse by the murder."

Sutton's eyes widened with wondering surprise as he read the next paragraph:

"The crime was committed early this morning—about two o'clock—and the chauffeur was killed with a butcher knife, which was left in the body. The knife ordinarily hung in the kitchen, the Tully cook said, on the right side of the kitchen cabinet. Brown's door is almost opposite Detective Tully's, being third from the head of the steps, but although——"

Sutton dropped the paper. He gasped inarticulately. That newspaper account! It tallied exactly with that idiotic manuscript which he had read the night before in Mittleback's room—exactly! If what he had read might be taken as orders, then the murderer of Ned Brown had acted in exactly the manner that Sutton had directed!

Sutton left the restaurant and headed directly for his room. Inside it, he sat back in his rocker and read the article again.

"Killed by stabbing," he mumbled. "Inside job. Knife hung on right side of cabinet. Heaven above, that's it!"

He read an additional paragraph, which completed the article:

"Tully can give no explanation for the crime. He knows of no one hostile to the dead man. He agrees that the murder is an inside job, but maintains that there is no one

in the house who might have committed the crime.

"Herman Kline, the detective's secretary, does not stay in the house at night."

"I'm in this somehow," Sutton said to himself. "Somehow, somewhere, I'm in this. This—this is devilish!"

Could his reading of that strange manuscript have any connection with the murder in Tully's home? How far apart were the two houses—Tully's and the Mittleback apartment? Sutton searched through the newspaper article and found Tully's address; then he compared it with Mittleback's.

"In the same block!" he ejaculated. "In the very same block. The apartment-house is on the corner facing east, and Tully's home faces north on the cross street. There's a connection there! There's a connection!

A sudden determination gripped him. He was sure that he would not read any more manuscripts for Mittleback! They'd try to jail him perhaps on a charge of picking pockets, but that was vastly better than being mixed up in murder! But what if he would disappear? What could they do? And didn't he have something on them, too?

No, he'd stay. Mittleback had his signed statement that he had read the manuscript. He couldn't get out of it. Some one had even witnessed him do it. He was in for it sure!

He sought a telephone booth and called the number of the apartment-house in which Mittleback lived. A woman answered the phone.

"Ideal apartments?" Sutton inquired.

"Yezzir."

"Want to speak to Mister Mittleback."

"Who?"

"Mittleback."

"Mitt—what?"

"Mittle*back!*"

"You got the wrong number. Good——"

"Wait! This is the Ideal apartments, ain't it?"

"Yezzir, but we ain't got nobody here named that."

"Then you did have last night?"

"Nozzir, never did have."

Sutton wondered. "What's the name of the men on the second floor, fifth door back, right side?"

"Lezze. It's—it's Kline."

"Kline?"

"Yezzir. Herman Kline."

"Herman Kline!"

"Zwat I said. Wanta speak to him?"

"Yes!"

"Holda line."

Sutton waited elatedly. Herman Kline! So the name of the man renting Mittleback's rooms was Herman Kline. And Herman Kline was the name of the secretary of Detective Tully, in whose home this strange murder had occurred!

A voice answered. Sutton recognized it at once as that of the elder Mittleback.

"Hello! So this is Herman Kline, heh?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is your friend Sutton talking."

"*Sutton!*"

"I've got the goods on you, old top!"

"Sutton, you ass! You utter fool!"

"Found you out, didn't I, heh? Well, let me tell you, I'll read no more stuff for you for five or for five hundred dollars!"

"Oh, you won't, heh?"

"No, *sir!*"

"Remember, Sutton, I have a paper signed by you. I can send you to——"

"To jail, possibly. And where can I send you, *Mittleback?* To the chair!"

"You're an ass!"

"Oh, I've been a boob, all right."

The voice that answered was menacingly cool. "We'll *get* you, Sutton!"

"Bah!" and Sutton clanged the hook.

He stepped from the booth very warm and breathing rapidly. So he had discovered that "Mittleback" was really the secretary of Detective Tully, whose chauffeur had been killed in the precise manner that he, Sutton, had innocently dictated.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN BAD

NICK SUTTON was up against it. He was satisfied as to one thing: there was a very tangible connection between his early morning declamation and the murder in Tully's home. But he failed to catch it. In the shelter of his room he asked himself a question: "Had he been the first cause of that murder?"

The newspaper flatly stated that in the Tully home were only Tully himself, his wife, their little son, the cook, and the chauffeur, who had been killed, and that the crime was without the slightest shadow of a doubt an inside job. Now, then, one of those persons must have committed that murder. Unless——

Unless he, Sutton, had indirectly committed it himself!

He groaned. He *was* in bad. He was mightily in bad. He might have known it—signal lights and dictaphones and crazy readings at one o'clock in the morning! He had been utterly mad to accept the offer. But, as he reflected back, he couldn't have even wormed out of it.

Sutton sensed the situation. The brothers had had a violent disagreement, and in order to settle it had grasped the opportunity which had presented itself when he had attempted to lift the elder brother's wallet. He was the goat. They were sidestepping guilt.

Sutton could not fathom the inner workings of this strange scheme. He knew only that he himself, by his reading, must have caused that murder in some mysterious way—and that he had signed a paper and taken responsibility for the results of the reading.

Sutton pulled on his cap at a stubborn angle and pounded down the stairs again. That paper he had signed—if he could only get his fingers on it!

He walked toward the Ideal apartments. He concocted a plan: he'd make certain neither Kline was in the rooms; then he'd slip inside and search for the paper. And if he found it?

He darted up the carpeted steps and halted before the door. It was closed. He softly turned the knob of the first door and pushed. It held fast; it was locked. This was his chance!

He drew from his pocket a skeleton key, turned it in the lock—and opened the door.

He stepped into a bedroom. He tiptoed into the next room. There was the table in the centre of the room, the chairs around it, the flowered rug, the seascape on the west wall. Sutton moved toward the library table.

In a moment he had pulled out the drawer of it. It was filled with tablets, pencils, odds and ends. Sutton searched the entire contents, but did not find anything resembling the sheet he had signed. He straightened and hunted the room with his eyes. Where could it be kept? Perhaps——

His body stiffened. He felt a strange sensation of *nearness*, and knew that some one was inside the room with him! He felt it. He was sure of it——

"Put up your hands, Sutton!"

The voice cracked from behind him. Standing in the door of the bedroom was the elder Kline, leveling an automatic at Sutton's abdomen!

"Caught you, eh?"

Sutton growled.

"Caught you, didn't I? Now, just step out into the hall, will you? Do you know the telephone number of police headquarters? I believe I'll have you call them."

"Yah, you swell-headed crook! Think you can give me the knee-shake, don't you? You can't scare me! You don't dare do it! I know too much about you!"

"So?" Kline answered suavely. "And haven't I got something on you?"

"More bluff! How'd you explain making me read that stuff?"

"My brother and I will testify that you were never in our rooms."

"Why, you——!"

"Step out into the hall, please!"

"Go on, you dirty crook. I'm onto you, and you know it. Go ahead! Try it!"

"Outside, please!"

Kline prodded Sutton through the door. The telephone stood on a pedestal just out-

side. Kline halted before it, his gun still leveled.

"One move and——"

"Can that stuff!"

Kline grinned mirthlessly and picked up the receiver. "Police headquarters, please," he purred into central's ear.

He really was calling headquarters! It was not bravado!

Like a flash he kicked out, struck Kline's wrists and with his toe knocked the gun upward and half toppled over the man himself. He emitted a cry of glee and whirled away. Down the hall he sped and stumbled down the stairs. Kline sprang after him. As Sutton reached the outer door Kline's gun cracked and a bullet spat into the door-jamb not six inches from Sutton's head.

Sutton darted out of the house and up the street. He flew into an alley with all the speed his straining legs could give him. Then he glanced back and saw no one following. Sutton slowed down, his chest heaving, glaring with baleful eyes at nothing at all.

———

CHAPTER FIVE

LIGHTS AT NIGHT

SUTTON found himself due for another long meditation.

He recalled in minute detail every incident of his stay at the Kline rooms the night before. He had waited until that gleam had come from the darkness as a signal for him to begin reading. From where had that signal come? From a near yard, of course—the Tully yard! That was almost certain.

Sutton had read; he didn't stop now to wonder why, but went on to the incident of the sneeze. Why should any man become so furious over a sneeze? Where did that dictaphone lead to? What was its purpose? The younger Kline had moved the table lamp from one edge of the table to the other—another prearranged signal. These mysterious actions meant something. Possibly some one had been lurking in the Tully yard the night of the murder.

Sutton held tight to the fact that he had agreed to come to the Kline room ten nights. Their plans were not yet complete then. Perhaps something of the same sort would occur that night. Sutton grasped that hope.

Well, if something similar was going to happen that night, he would certainly be there to see it.

Sutton decided he would take a stand in the Tully yard late that night—just before one o'clock. It would be dark and he could watch without being seen. Night-glasses—they would be superb for this sort of work, so Sutton hunted through the drawer of his bureau and found his old pair. He polished the lenses. He ate a scant supper and waited.

At twelve o'clock he left his room. The binoculars he carried in one hip pocket, and in the other his tiny automatic. He reached the neighborhood of the Ideal apartments and trudged up the side street. There, two houses from the corner, stood the Tully home.

It was not twelve-twenty. Sutton circled the block, crossed an alley and, after glancing up and down the street to determine if he were being watched, he crept up its dark length.

He paused behind the garage which occupied the rear of the Tully grounds. Sutton entered the passageway beside the garage. Then he crept toward a large snowball bush, off to one corner, and with no more than one or two slight rustlings secreted himself behind it.

The Tully home was entirely dark. The upper windows, Sutton saw, were open.

Across two back yards the Ideal apartment-house loomed. In the second floor, third and fourth windows from the rear, a light burned. Through an unshaded window a library table was visible, and on the table a lamp stood. Sutton chuckled. So it was in the Tully yard that the other man had been when Kline the younger had signaled with the light.

The garage, Sutton noticed, was a large

one, with apparently several rooms built above the housing for the car.

Sutton glanced over the scene with impatient curiosity. He drew his glasses and put them to his eyes, and directed them first at the window of the Ideal apartments.

He saw plainly the table and the light. In a chair beside the table a man was seated. It was the younger Kline.

With his binoculars Sutton searched the side of the building for any traces of the wires which must lead from the hidden dictaphone. The moon was up a few degrees and shining with a ghoulish light, which was, however, quite sufficient for use of the powerful glasses which Sutton held to his eyes. Again and again he swept them over the wall of the building, searching for the tiny wires—and finally he found them.

Two slender streaks of black crossed the lighter side of the building. With his glasses Sutton followed them slowly and carefully. They led away from the building; yes, they hung in the air. Then another house loomed in the circles of vision, and Sutton breathed in triumph. The wires led directly to the Tully home!

He followed them down the side of the building. They ended abruptly—seemed to enter through one of the bedroom windows.

As he lowered his glasses he was startled by the appearance of a round spot of bright light which flashed out from the sky to his right. It gleamed again, and Sutton's eyes swept to it. Again it flashed. It was the light of an electric torch, and it came from one of the upper windows of the garage!

Sutton directed his glasses at the window above him. He gasped inwardly. A man was bending forward, just inside the window, and peering out. And the man was Herman Kline!

Peering at Kline, framed in the small window of the garage, Sutton started. Kline was also provided himself with a pair of night-glasses. He was staring through them at the rear of the Tully home, gazing at the window through which the wires of the dictaphone led!

Sutton, too, trained his glasses at that window, but could see nothing.

Minutes passed. After what seemed an age-long interval the light in the window of the Ideal apartment-house slowly moved from one side of the table to the rear. Then, above, in the garage, the light flashed again once. In the Ideal apartments the shade was pulled down. So apparently the night's scheme was carried out effectively.

Stealthily steps descended an unseen staircase in the garage. Then came the crunching of gravel as some one walked quietly along the length of the alley. The footfalls died away.

Sutton crouched for a moment in indecision. He was certain of one thing now: himself, that dictaphone and Herman Kline were tightly connected with the murder of Tully's chauffeur. The wires of the dictaphone through which Sutton had spoken led directly to a bedroom in the Tully home. What strange effect had this arrangement? Sutton decided that he must act; that he had to work his way into the Tully home and discover where the other end of the dictaphone led.

He arose quietly and crept across the lawn toward the dark house. He reached the rear porch of the building—and suddenly his movements froze!

From an upper part of the Tully home rang a terrorized scream—a short, suppressed shriek of horror!

Sutton thought instinctively of the murder of the night before. Something was happening inside the house even now! For a moment he stood stark motionless, heart pounding, listening intently.

He did not perceive the approach of a dark figure which glided silently along the side of the Tully home. Now the form was directly behind Sutton. The man raised high an arm and brought it forcibly downward. A blackjack cracked smartly against Sutton's head.

He lurched to the ground senseless.

Above him Detective John Hemmings of the city police force regarded him grimly and said:

"Got you now, old boy!"

CHAPTER SIX

EXPLANATIONS

NICK SUTTON experienced the insertion of a long, blank period of nothingness into his conscious mind.

He did not know that Detective John Hemmings picked him bodily up and carried him into the Tully home, where he deposited him on a davenport. Sutton's period of unknowingness endured for an hour.

Passing through stage after stage of torturous return to his senses, he blinked his eyes and stared up at a familiar ceiling. He tried to place himself and could not. Then he perceived, seated beside the table and staring at him intently, Hemmings.

"Coming around, heh?" Hemmings asked in a low tone.

Sutton coughed. "Where—where am I?"

"You should know that. You've been here before."

"No," Sutton denied, shaking his aching head; "I've never been *here* before."

"Yes, you have. Last night, when you murdered Ned Brown."

Sutton suddenly sat up. Hemmings moved his hand toward his hip, but Sutton only stared at him widely and unbelievingly.

"You don't think *I* killed Ned Brown!"

"Positive of it."

"You're—you're mistaken." Sutton clasped his aching head in his arms.

"Better not move," Hemmings cautioned. "But answer me this, will you: Why on earth did you kill an innocent chauffeur and an innocent cook?"

"Why did I—*and* a cook!"

"Exactly."

Sutton's brain twisted. Now he recalled the strangling scream he had heard just before his senses were knocked inactive. "Was the cook killed—here—to-night?" he demanded awesomely.

"You ought to know that, seeing you did it!"

Sutton raised his hand in desperate solemnity. "Before God, I swear I didn't do it!"

Hemmings laughed at him.

"I'm telling you," Sutton stated earnestly, "I've never been inside this house before to-night, and I never croaked a guy in my life!"

"Talk's easy."

He fully realized his condemning position. It was plain to him that this night another crime had occurred in the Tully home. He had been downstairs, outside, when he had heard what must have been the dying cry of the poor woman.

"Listen!" Sutton ejaculated with sudden hope. "You don't want to string up an innocent man, do you? Tell me what happened here to-night, please!"

Hemmings shrugged. "You don't look like a killer, but looks don't count much. I stayed around here since early this evening watching the house. Tully's all upset by the killing of the chauffeur last night—extremely nervous, you know. As I watched the house to-night I came around the yard and saw you creeping across the lawn toward the porch. I simply played safe and kocked you off to question you later. I went upstairs and found Mrs. Tully awake. She'd been awakened by a scream. I investigated and found the cook's door open. She was lying on the bed, dead—stabbed, like Ned Brown. The knife was still in the body. For the love of me I can't see why you did it!"

"I swear," Sutton snapped emotionally, "I didn't kill her." His brain during the detective's narrative had been racing. "Now, answer this question for me, will you? When you were coming around the house, did you hear a scream?"

"I did."

"Well, if I was downstairs and outside when that scream sounded, how could I have been upstairs?"

Hemmings considered. "She was killed almost instantly; I'll say that for you. I'd judge you're innocent of the crime." He wanted to make the man talk.

"Good! You're white! Didn't all the detectives in the city say the job last night was an inside one? How about it to-night?"

"Exactly the same conditions applied to another victim."

The ecstatic Sutton exclaimed, rising: "If you know that, you can't believe that I'm guilty!"

Hemmings smiled. "No," he said, "I now don't believe you're guilty. I accused you first to get your story. You look like a clean fellow to me—no murderer's blood in you."

Sutton sank to the davenport in sheer relief.

"But then," Hemmings caught up, "you've got a lot to explain! You are under suspicion as an accomplice. I don't like to get young fellows like you into criminal trouble; it stamps a fellow, you know. Nobody knows that better than a detective."

"You're white!"

"I believe you're innocent of these crimes. I've got a sort of reputation for helping fellows like you, you know. But there's two murders which have been committed in this house on two consecutive nights, and they've got to be straightened out. Well, son, I'm waiting for your explanation of why you were hanging around here to-night."

Sutton's brain went its limit of speed.

He launched upon the story in this manner: he told of his lifting Kline's wallet; of Kline's forcing him to pledge alliance to them; of having been forced to come to the Kline rooms; of Kline's false name; of the reading by him (Sutton) of the queer manuscript; and of his attempt to find out the truth about the strange series of events.

"Strange," Hemmings commented. "Repeat that queer series of words again."

Sutton did so.

"Sounds like the suggestions given by a hypnotist to his subject," Hemmings opined.

A silence followed, broken at last by Sutton's plaintive

"What are you going to do?"

"I've got to keep my eye on you."

"I ain't done a thing! I been made a boob of by those Klines, and they're on my trail, at that!" He put every iota of appeal into his voice that he could summon. "Boss, if you'll let me go, I'll swear by Heaven that you'll have me whenever you want me; I'll come to you whenever you say. I swear it, boss. You can have me shadowed if you want to."

Hemmings nodded. "You mean that, all right?"

"Boss, I *mean* it! You're white, and I'm for you. Let me keep under cover, where Herman Kline can't see me, and I'll go through this game with you."

Hemmings abruptly walked through the dark rooms beyond, and Sutton followed close after. The detective opened the front door wide and halted Sutton as he gazed at him searchingly.

"I'm treating you square," he said. "No other cop on the force would risk this. You're making or breaking this case for me. Now, be back here to-morrow night. Come at midnight. And if you don't——"

"I will! I will! Boss, I'm for you!"

He shambled off the front porch and looked back at the closed door with admiration for the man behind it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHISPERS

NEXT morning, over his hot cakes and coffee, Nick Sutton suffered another shock.

He carefully read an account of the second murder in the Tully home and realized that it was a duplicate of the first. It, too, was an inside job. This being undoubtedly the case, then one of the three remaining members of the household must be the criminal—either Tully himself, Mrs. Tully or their five-year-old boy, Dick. But this was not believable.

Sutton grew cold at the thought. But this discomfort was as nothing compared with the surprise given him by the reading of a small item on a back page.

"POLICE LOOKING FOR PICKPOCKET

"The police are on the lookout for a pickpocket who has been working in this city. Two persons, who wish their names withheld, have reported being victimized by the same man.

"The pickpocket is a crude worker, for both men detected him, though too late to apprehend him. They furnish a good description of him. Both men say he is about twenty-five years old, wears a striped blue suit, a gray cap, brown shoes, is about five feet ten inches in height, and on his right cheek is a small scar. One of the men heard some one else speak to this criminal as 'Sutton.'"

Sutton headed directly for his room. So the Klines had reported him, giving their information as two separate victims, and had furnished the police with his description! Now every cop in the city would be on the lookout for him!

At twelve o'clock that night, after a day spent entirely indoors, true to his promise to Hemmings, Sutton walked across the porch of the Tully home and knocked on the front door.

The moon, shining above, bathed the scene in a sickly half-light suggestive of spectres. Sutton's knock echoed hollowly through the house. He waited impatiently. He felt in his bones that to-night was the night of decision; that this night he must either triumph or go under forever. Footfalls echoed inside the dark house and the door was opened.

Sutton stepped inside, past Hemmings. Standing beside the library table again, he said breathlessly to the officer:

"Well, I came back!"

"I see you did. I knew you would. Sit down."

Hemmings took a chair opposite Sutton. The house was eerily still. It was somewhere upstairs that two persons had been stabbed to death by some one lurking unseen in the house. On two consecutive nights had a crime occurred. Would a third take place on this night?

"I've been looking around," Hemmings explained. "I found the dictaphone wires on the outside of the house; they disappear from view inside Tully's room. While Tully was out for a stroll this morning I investigated.

"A month ago the house was papered. I found the other end of the dictaphone hidden in a hollow in the wall, covered with a patch of the new wall paper. It is a strange contrivance—a loud-speaking telephone receiver with a small amplifying horn attached. It is only a foot or so from Tully's head when he sleeps. Any words spoken into the transmitter Tully might hear on his bed if he were awake."

"But what's the idea?"

"I'm not sure. Those words you told me that Kline repeated sound very much like a hypnotist's suggestions to his subject. I know a little of such things. Tully is very weak and nervous at present; he would accept such suggestions now, because he is not strong enough to combat them."

"What're we going to do?"

"Watch. That hidden dictaphone means something. To-night you and I are going to slip into Tully's room after he is asleep, and we'll wait."

"Do you s'pose——"

"We're supposing nothing. It's twelve-thirty now. Come on."

Hemmings led Sutton into the hall. Up the stairs they went and down the upper corridor. Opposite a door to the left they paused. Hemmings silently placed his ear to the panel and heard faintly the long respirations of a man asleep. He signaled to Sutton to follow him.

Carefully he pushed the door open. The room was bathed in a short half-glow, which radiated from the wan moon outside. By the windows to the south a man lay on a bed sleeping, breathing heavily. It was Tully.

Sutton and Hemmings for a moment watched the still form on the bed; then Hemmings seated himself and Sutton sank down beside him. Together they waited.

Except for the ghostly radiations from the feeble moon outside the house was dark. The windows were bluish oblongs against a blue-black wall. Out there the lawn was visible—and the garage.

Minutes crawled by.

In that uncannily silent room no sound was audible except the regular breathing of the three men. The two watchers kept their eyes continually on Tully, who now and again shifted uneasily. They kept their

ears strained for the slightest sound. And in a moment they heard something.

Hemmings's body tensed. At the same time Sutton was aware of a faint, faint voice—a sound so small it would easily have been imagined. But he heard it again. It *was* a voice, low, soft, speaking deliberately and slowly. And it was coming from the region of the bed on which Detective Tully lay.

Both men sat stock-still.

The spectral voice came more loudly, but still was faint as a whisper. It came from the air, as though a phantom were speaking; in the ghoulish light of the air it smacked of the supernatural. Gradually words were distinguishable. It seemed that an unseen being were speaking, in the corner, these breathy words:

"Up.—Up, now.—Up.—Up.—Up.—Up—now.—Up—easily—No—noise.—No—noise.—Into—the—hall.—Into—the—hall next."

The strange voice was speaking the same manuscript which Sutton had read two nights before in the Kline room. It progressed slowly. The form on the bed moved uneasily. Once Tully emitted a low groan, as if in protest. But the ghostly voice continued, unabated:

"In—the—kitchen.—In—the—kitchen.—Table.—Table.—Table—drawer.—In—the—table—drawer——"

Gradually now the voice died away. A silent interval passed. Then again it began. It pronounced carefully the same strange arrangement of words. The form on the bed writhed. It heaved convulsively. From the distant garage a light flashed once. On the instant the voice ceased speaking.

An interval. After a moment Tully lay motionless again. And again from the garage a white circle of light gleamed. Immediately the low voice continued, speaking from nowhere. And again the form on the bed began to move uneasily.

Hemmings was standing now, staring at the form on the bed; Sutton stood also. Suddenly they emitted a gasp of amazement and took an involuntary step backward. The sleeping man had suddenly thrown his feet off the bed and was in a sitting position, his eyes wide open!

But the wide eyes stared unseeingly at the opposite wall. Tully stood uncertainly. He pushed his hand out in front of him, like a man groping. He stepped forward with rigid knees. He walked stiffly toward the door.

Tully was walking in his sleep!

Tully stepped into the hall. As he proceeded fearlessly Hemmings whispered to Sutton:

"Follow him. I'll get in front. Don't let him out of your sight."

As Sutton nodded Hemmings walked silently down the dark hall past the sleep-walker. Tully was now at the head of the stairs. Sutton followed. Hemmings ran halfway downstairs noiselessly as Tully began to descend. With the sleeping man walking stiffly between them, the men reached the lower floor.

This strange procession passed through several doors, through several rooms, and finally entered the kitchen!

Tully walked straight toward the table. He pulled out the drawer and groped among the kitchen utensils it contained. Then he straightened with something in his hand. It was a long, sharp butcher knife!

Then began the return upstairs. Hemmings preceded and Sutton followed behind the man walking in his sleep. Tully progressed at an even rate, the knife clutched tightly in his hand. Silently they climbed the stair. They walked down the hall as noiselessly. The procession halted as Tully stopped.

With his empty hand the sleeping man groped for the knob of the door and pushed it open. Walking stiff-kneed, he entered. Hemmings crowded past him, and as he did so Sutton saw a desperate light in his eyes.

Inside the room the crisis came.

On the bed a small boy lay. It was Tully's little son, Dick. The sleep-walker advanced toward the bed, the butcher knife clutched in his raised right hand. Hemmings rushed to the other side of the bed as Tully halted. Tully raised the knife higher, ready to plunge it into the body of the innocent boy sleeping on the bed!

Like a flash Hemmings darted his arms out and caught the sleeping youngster. At the same instant the knife descended. It hissed into the mattress, flashed upward again, darted down once more, and again. Tully released it and left it protruding from the bed. The blows struck where the boy had been lying; had not Hemmings lifted him Tully would have instantly killed his own son.

Then Tully calmly turned and walked from the room. Sutton pulled the deadly knife from the mattress. Hemmings placed the boy, still sleeping, on the bed. Then they quickly followed Tully.

Tully had entered his own room. He automatically slipped beneath the covers of his bed, and in a moment was lying calmly, as though he had slept quietly the entire night.

Sutton stared from the knife in his hand full into Hemmings's blanched face. Now the mystery of the two murders was dispelled.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEMESIS

IN the library downstairs Hemmings, pale and grim, fingered his cuff-link nervously.

"It's clear now, isn't it?" he demanded brokenly of the breathless Sutton.

Sutton gulped and nodded.

"What a damnably devilish scheme! Listen, Sutton. To-day I looked up Kline. Thanks to your information, I found that, while he has no criminal record, his father was notorious. He was a revengeful fiend; revenge was the sole aim of his life. His sons inherited that trait; they are Corsicans. Years ago Tully arrested the father for a murder. The father was justly convicted and hung on the strength of the evidence secured by Tully. This—this must be the sons' revenge for their father's death. I can't think it's anything else!

"You understand now that while Tully slept those whispers affected his mind. His conscious brain was asleep, and only his subconscious brain was affected by the whispers. In his weak and nervous condition they lodged there. It is a form of hypnotism. Suggestions given during natural sleep are sometimes obeyed as implicitly as though the sleep were hypnotic. No one but a man whose nerves are shattered, as Tully's are, would even subconsciously obey such suggestions. God! what snakes they were to take advantage of his sickness!"

Sutton only stared.

"Tully cannot be judged guilty of those murders," Hemmings declared staunchly. "You and I," he declared, "are the only living human beings, except the murderous Klines, who know of this. We're going to keep it quiet. We'll say nothing. We're going to get the Klines for this, but Tully's not going to suffer. He's suffered enough already."

Sutton extended his own hand toward Hemmings's palm.

"I'm with you, I'm with you to the last!"

"Then follow me."

Hemmings caught up his hat and, Sutton following, immediately left the house. They rounded the corner and paused in front of the Ideal apartment house. Hemmings felt for his gun, and Sutton gripped his own. Together they climbed the carpeted flight and halted before the door of the Kline apartment. The house was silent; only a feeble globe illumined the hall. Hemmings's face was grim as he inserted a skeleton key into the lock and turned it. With a careful push he opened the door.

It was dark inside. Sutton pressed himself close to the detective. Together they advanced through the inky darkness. They encountered a wall with outstretched arms, paused, holding their breath, and listened.

No sound broke the silence.

They moved forward through a door. Sutton, his fingers sliding along the wall, found the light switch. He knew that Hemmings was in the doorway with his gun up. Sutton raised his own in the direction of the bed. Suddenly he snapped on the lights.

The room jumped into brilliance, and the intruders blinked. Then they lowered their

guns and emitted exclamations of horrified surprise. Sutton backed away from the bed, sickened. He made a quick motion to Hemmings, and Hemmings, only too glad to get out of the room, obeyed.

Sutton closed the door and shuddered. "That's Nemesis," he said. "The younger one of them was killed instantly. The other, Herman, died from the frightful cuts he received."

"What—what happened?"

"Can't you see? One of those men grew so accustomed to repeating that string of suggestions over the dictaphone that it lodged in his brain. To-night, evidently during his sleep, it acted. He knifed his brother fearfully while asleep, I judge. Then Herman, very badly hurt, in frantic revenge stabbed the other. They are both quite dead."

"You and I," Hemmings said over their clasped hands, "are the only persons living who know the secret of the murders in the Tully home. It's going to be added to the list of unsolved crimes. The guilt dies with the Kline brothers. You swear it?"

"With the exception of one other I swear it," said Sutton.

"Who is this other?" said Hemmings in surprise.

"Your chief," said Sutton who, reaching down to his foot, extracted a soiled card from a secret compartment in the sole of his shoe and handed it to the now astonished Hemmings.

Hemmings for an instant gazed blankly at this card bearing the name of a well-known criminologist who at times assisted in the unraveling of particularly mysterious cases.

The pseudo Sutton was the first to break the silence. He began:

"I am sorry that I was compelled to fool you into the belief that I was a crook, but that is the method I employ when working on a case. I live and act as I think a criminal would, even to the extent of figuring out his exact line of reasoning. With this firmly fixed in my mind, I am then able to act in the same manner as a criminal placed in a similar predicament. It is needless for me to go into details telling how I permitted Kline to catch me picking his pockets and then playing the part of dip, etc.

"Your chief realized that Tully's case was unusual, even unnatural. Something was radically wrong somewhere. In the beginning his case seemed simple enough, and a few weeks of quiet and rest should have restored Tully to his usual vigorous and normal condition. When he did not respond to this treatment and went from bad to worse, his doctors were puzzled. Their late reports clearly indicate that he was dying slowly and that this condition was being created by something foreign to them.

"Your chief began a quiet investigation and learned the facts, which you already know concerning the Klines and their father. He suspected that they were in some way connected with Tully's condition, and it was at this point that he called on me for assistance. He knew that Kline and his brother could hardly be trapped by any one on the local force without an assistant unknown to those fiends.

"God alone knows how far they would have gone with their fiendishness. First they removed the chauffeur and cook, who might have suspected something there to-night, and I shudder when I think of what might have happened had we not been present.

"Tully in his weakened condition was easy prey to the mental suggestions of those monsters, whose main desire was to punish him for doing his duty in their father's case.

"Hemmings, your chief has great confidence in you and imbued me with it, otherwise I hardly think that I would have allowed you to blackjack me," continued Sutton as he rubbed his head.

"There is nothing more to be done here, so we might as well start for your chief's home, where he is awaiting us."

Hemmings, who had not spoken a single word during Sutton's recital, extended his hand, and the criminologist clasped it as they started for the chief's home.

The Quarrel

By CARL GARRETT HODGES

THE three of us, Dexter, "Smiling Joe" and myself, were lounging in our rooms in New York's best hotel. A very expensive suite, it took quite a small fortune to keep it and to entertain with theatre parties and other affairs. But we had made enough on a certian Cordova necklace to live in luxury for a year, although an old Epstein jewel fence had given us only one-third of the intrinsic value of the precious necklace.

I and Dexter, ungrammatically speaking, were puffing contentedly away at our cigars, studying musingly the patterns in the Oriental rugs which littered the floor. "Smiling Joe" did not appear so happy and carefree. He had been restless all evening, and as he was rarely so we were worried about him.

All of a sudden he looked up at Dexter and me, a very slight curl of contempt on his face. He began speaking in a heavy voice. "I'm getting pretty dog-goned tired of this lazy life. I've had enough of it. Why can't we do something? This constant loafing is getting on my nerves. I can't stand it."

"Cool down, Joe," I cautioned; "you'll forget it in a little while."

"Forget it nothing!" he grumbled. "We haven't done a single job since that old Cordova necklace haul in Madrid. Ever since we've loafed around this hotel." He sprang up in his anger and paced the room.

Dexter regarded him with smiling eyes. Joe turned on him with anger and snapped out:

"If you'd let me run this thing we'd do something, let me tell you. I wouldn't give the police a minute's rest. I wouldn't get caught, either," he added.

This was Dexter's one sore spot. He resented any insinuations as to the quality of his leadership. He sprang up from the lounge, his face flushed, and strode over to "Smiling Joe," who stood at the window now, his back towards us.

Dexter put a hand on "Smiling Joe's" shoulder and spun him around.

"Look here," he snapped; "if you don't like the way I run things you know what you can do."

He glanced meaningly at the door.

"Smiling Joe" never moved. Looking at Dexter with cunning eyes, he retorted:

"Yes, I know what I could do. I could squeal and put both of you behind the bars inside of twenty-four hours. In the second place, I could dissolve our partnership and not squeal on you, either. You know what I mean?"

Dexter was unmoved.

"In the first place," he said, "you wouldn't squeal, because it would ruin your chances of a future as a 'gentleman burglar.' You would be too well known. In the second place, as to the idea that Frank," nodding at me, "does not relish my leadership, I don't believe it."

Both of them looked at me expectantly.

"I don't like to make any statement as to the abilities of either of you," I said, "but the present run of things suits me."

And it did. I had met Dexter on a job out in Brooklyn one night. Dexter had once been of a good family, but from financial distresses he had been forced to become a crook. Something of an aristocrat at heart, he had chosen the rôle of gentleman burglar, where he could move in the society he had been used to. In the course of a few years we had left behind a series of

baffling crimes, unsolvable by the police. Nearly all of the plans had been made and carried out by Dexter. But sometimes in a pinch Dexter needed me. I could open anything that was locked or unlocked. We never left clues behind us, and the amusing part of it was that we heard at first hand all rumors as to the identity of the culprits. Sometimes, even after the theft of rare gems at entertainments at which we were present, Pinkerton men interviewed us concerning the crimes, never dreaming that we were the very ones they sought. No wonder I found no fault with Dexter's leadership. We had worked together for two years before "Smiling Joe" was admitted to the combination. We had picked him up over in Madrid on the Cordova job, and as he evinced an eagerness toward our line we brought him to America. We never learned much about him; that is, his past. All this passed through my mind before I answered Dexter. At my statement of satisfaction Dexter's eyes showed his thanks, although I know he knew how I would answer. Joe glared at me. He showed no malice, just a lot of momentary anger.

The situation relaxed a trifle. Dexter suggested vague plans for securing the famous "Alphabet" diamond necklace owned by Donna Lucia d'Alvarado of Brazil, and was the guest of honor at many entertainments. The "Alphabet" was a famous diamond necklace, called so because it was made up of exactly twenty-six large flawless stones.

Joe would have none of it.

"No," he shouted fiercely, "I quit right now." He paced the apartment. "You two may have to wait a month before you get a chance at that necklace. I'm out for smaller game. I'm going to get busy."

At this he slid into his overcoat and left the room, slamming the door behind him.

"Too bad," Dexter muttered.

The next morning I rather expected "Smiling Joe" to come around penitent, but he did not appear. Then, I felt sure, the rupture was to be permanent.

For a while Dexter seemed disconsolate over the quarrel, but he soon lost his melancholy air and became bright and cheerful. We managed to live on without the aid of "Smiling Joe." We attended our clubs as usual and entertained lavishly in our apartments. We still had plenty of cash left, but at the rate we were going we would run through it in a short time. In fact, we had to spend money lavishly in order to keep in the midst of the society from which we got our living. But in our case we also had to spend it with a free hand, thus making it necessary for us to get more money at intervals. We always sold our finds to the old fence.

A few days after the rupture we were considerably surprised over several columns in the newspapers announcing the theft of some rare jewels from the private collection of a wealthy jeweler. The burglar left no clues on which the police could base an investigation. I put down the theft to "Smiling Joe." It looked like his work. I think that he purposely made the exploit as daring and unusual as possible, knowing that Dexter would hear of it and suspect him of being the culprit. At least "Smiling Joe" was keeping his word. He had stirred up the police considerably, and he hadn't been caught, either, to use his own words.

One day I was lounging in our rooms, when Dexter bustled in with our mail. He held two square envelopes in his hand. One of them he tossed to me and said:

"We've got a chance now, and I intend to take it. I'll get that 'Alphabet' from the neck of Donna Lucia d'Alvarado next Wednesday."

I was puzzled, and I opened the envelope. It bore an invitation to a ball at the Armitage home the following Wednesday. The puzzle cleared a little, but Dexter's statement still had little meaning to me.

"How do you know?" I asked, "that the lady with the long name will be present?"

"I don't know," he replied, "but I am reasonably sure of it. As she is the social 'catch,' she will undoubtedly be a guest, for I've found out she's a friend of the people giving the dance."

We discussed various plans, but I could get little or nothing from Dexter as to what he really intended to do. That he had decided to obtain the famous necklace I was

sure. But as to how he intended to accomplish the feat I could only guess.

Two days before the ball I knew no more of Dexter's plans than I had before. To make matters worse, on Monday and Tuesday he was at home only long enough to change clothes hurriedly, and he was off again, leaving no information as to his plans or destination.

Wednesday morning he was gone when I awoke. He left a note for me to the effect that I could lay out his clothes for the ball and arrange with a taxi for seven-thirty. Nothing more.

The day passed slowly for me. I made the rounds of my clubs, coming back to the hotel several times to see if, by any chance, Dexter had returned. He evidently dined out, if he dined at all, for he did not come home at noon.

The afternoon passed wearily. I read, but could not become interested, as I was thinking of the coming adventure and its outcome. I smoked until I became dizzy. At each step in the corridor I sat up expectantly, hoping it was Dexter, and at five o'clock I laid out his clothes, but still he did not come. I was just wondering whether some accident had befallen Dexter when he hurried in, looking tired but happy. He chided me on my desolate appearance.

Dexter spent a half hour in the bath. At intervals I heard him use such inconsistent remarks as this:

"I think I'll wear my ruby stud. It matches my hair." Or "Do you think Alice will say 'Yes' to-night? There's a beautiful moon." Dexter was forever chiding me about Alice Lake, hinting at love affairs. I paid no attention to his sallies. Finally he emerged, his body glowing with vibrant health. We both dressed in silence, for I was weary and Dexter seemed to be musing.

We left in a taxi at seven-thirty. Not until we had almost reached the Armitage home did Dexter confide an inkling of his plans to me. Then he said:

"I think I'll try for the necklace right after dinner. You keep your eyes on me. When I jam my right hand into my trousers pocket it will be the signal for you to snap off the lights. At the second flash of my flashlight snap them on again. I do the rest."

I could get nothing more from him.

We reached the Armitage home in the midst of a swarm of vehicles and went in at once. I wanted plenty of time to locate the light switches. I soon found that the switch which controlled the current for the dining-room was halfway concealed beneath the draperies by the dining-room door.

Although the event was one of splendor, I did not enjoy myself during the evening. I was continually watching Dexter, much to the confusion of Alice, although I knew that he was to make no attempt toward the necklace until after dinner. I too watched for the d'Alvarado necklace, otherwise known as the "Alphabet." Jewels there were aplenty on the guests. On every woman's person there flashed some rare or famous stone, most of them worth small fortunes, as fortunes are reckoned now. Donna Lucia d'Alvarado did not arrive until just before dinner. She had been delayed by an unavoidable accident, she said. When I was introduced my eyes were almost riveted on the far-famed necklace. It sparkled with a brilliancy far superior to that of any diamonds I had ever seen. I knew then why Dexter had so set his heart on obtaining the necklace.

Sprinkled here and there were faces I did not know, but which, through some strange incident, I felt sure were detectives. They held aloof from the others. I noticed, too, that their eyes were always near the Donna, as if they had been set to guard the jewels.

In gazing abstractedly at the guests I was presently surprised. Over near the French window was a figure that seemed in some way familiar to me. A tall, well-built fellow he was, with a dark mustache and beard, matching the heavy head of hair. His eyes roved over toward me. I returned the glance, giving no sign of recognition. But I recognized the fellow. Despite the disguise, for I was sure it was a disguise, I recognized him. When I had managed to approach closer I glanced at his right hand. Then I knew he was the one I thought he was, for across the hand, running from his

index finger to the wrist, was a long, white scar. It was "Smiling Joe."

Now I knew that Dexter had a task before him. "Smiling Joe" had come, undoubtedly decided in an attempt to gain the necklace. And he had the advantage of Dexter, for he knew more or less of Dexter's methods and would take steps to combat them. I was dismayed. I signaled to Dexter and nodded toward "Smiling Joe." He looked and then nodded confidently, sending me a sly wink. I felt easier now. Dexter knew what he was up against and felt no uneasiness, so why should I?

At dinner Dexter exchanged careless banter with all that were near him. He seemed in the most carefree of moods. Near the end of the meal, though, I saw he was rather nervous. I did not blame him for being so.

As we rose from the table Dexter glanced meaningly at me. I strolled over unconcernedly to the dining-room door. As I turned I studied the room. Near the head of the table stood Donna Lucia d'Alvarado, chatting amiably with Mrs. Armitage. Immediately behind her was Dexter, slightly nervous I knew, although he did not betray the fact. And to the left of Mrs. Armitage, almost touching her, was "Smiling Joe," a look of desperation on his face.

Dexter jammed his hand in his pocket. I snapped out the light. At first there was a hushed silence as darkness fell over the room. Then a few hurried steps, a snap of something broken, and a shrill cry:

"Oh, my necklace!"

A confused murmur arose from the guests.

A ray of light flashed from some one's hand. It was only a finger of light and showed only what it shone on. The light moved in a circle and stopped. What was that? The ray of light was focused on a man's pocket. And from the coat pocket half hung—what? The Alphabet! As I looked in astonishment a hand flew up and shoved the necklace into the pocket. It was done in a flash, but not before I saw the jagged scar which ran from finger to wrist. I was startled. "Smiling Joe" had beaten Dexter at his own game and secured the necklace!

The ray of light swept upward, but showed only an expanse of bare wall. "Smiling Joe" had gone. The ray of light was snapped off. A crash sounded as the French window was broken in with a chair, which rolled to the veranda. Leaping over the rail of the veranda, silhouetted against the sky, was the figure of a man. I knew it was "Smiling Joe." The ray of light flashed on again. I marked time on the polished floor to give the impression of hurried steps, and snapped the light on.

All was confusion. In the centre of the room stood Dexter, his right arm supporting the Donna, who was almost unconscious. In his left hand was the flash-light. The guests stood, still gaping with surprise. The French window was utterly ruined, as was the chair which had crashed through it. Both lay broken on the veranda.

Excitement reigned supreme. The Donna was escorted to her room. The detectives, for such the men proved to be, had left immediately after "Smiling Joe's" whirlwind departure, but they returned after a short search, sullen and empty-handed. I was glad; although "Smiling Joe" had beaten Dexter, I had no desire to see his promising career ended so abruptly.

The party broke up shortly. In the confusion of leaving Dexter and I managed to slip away alone. His face was dark with anger. After we had left, though, his features brightened considerably and he became quite cheerful. He was taking the defeat much easier than I thought he could, so keen had he been in his desire to get the "Alphabet."

He leaned back in the taxi, puffing contentedly at a cigar.

"Too bad," I murmured sympathetically, "that you lost the necklace. But it wasn't your fault," I added. "Joe beat you to it, that's all."

Dexter gave me what I thought at the time to be a smile of chagrin. I did not allude to the matter again during the ride home. As he took the defeat so easily, I had no wish to disturb him. When we reached our suite in the hotel a light glowed

through the transom. I stopped in amazement, wondering who could be waiting for us. Dexter opened the door and we went in. Under the floor lamp, reading a magazine, was "Smiling Joe."

He looked up as we entered, to grin sheepishly.

"I'll come back if you want me?" said he.

"You're welcome," we answered with one voice.

"Then I have no further use for this," he went on; taking something from his pocket and rising from his chair, he dropped it into Dexter's open palm. It was the necklace he had stolen that night. It lay there glistening in Dexter's hand.

Dexter laughed as he took something from his own pocket. With a wide grin he dropped a necklace beside Joe's. But, oh, what a difference! "Smiling Joe's" face showed no surprise. Dexter had gotten the real necklace. How, I did not know.

"Sit down and I'll explain," Dexter said as he noticed that I looked puzzled.

We drew our chairs up together, and Dexter explained.

"To secure the necklace and at the same time to convince Joe of my right to leadership, I had our old fence make me a duplicate of the 'Alphabet.' It was easy from the description I furnished him. Then I planted a paste necklace in Joe's pocket, knowing he would try to elope with what he thought to be the real one."

Here Joe broke in:

"I thought that in the darkness you had mistaken me for Frank and had given the necklace to me instead of him."

Dexter laughed.

"That's just what I wanted you to think."

"Anyway," I said, "the laugh's on me. I didn't see through your trick at all. Dexter kept a card up his sleeve."

GREAT STRENGTH IN TINY BODIES

PROBABLY the most wonderful feature of a mosquito is its muscularity. This may seem a ludicrous statement, but a great surprise awaits any one who the next time examines one of these insects under a glass.

Size for size, a mosquito's wing muscles are equal to an eagle's. Even on a calm day a mosquito can fly 40 to 50 miles without a halt, and with a helping wind three times this distance. The ordinary housefly, too, has astonishing wing strength. Tests have shown that when it desires really to hurry it can "dash" 160 feet in a second—110 miles an hour, straight away.

Imagine a man who could lift 73,800 pounds! He would have all known "strong men" of past and present beaten so far that comparisons would be ridiculous. But that is what our average man could lift were he as strong in proportion to his size as a crab; a weight of 490 times its own is just a good average lift for a crab!

A Belgian scientist found that a bee, weight for weight, was 30 times as strong as a horse.

It has also been found that an ordinary housefly can lift a matchstick, and that in doing so it exerts as much power in proportion to his size as a man uses when he holds aloft on his feet a beam 14 feet long by 30 inches square. Even a very small bug can drag six matches—the equivalent to a man pulling 330 beams as large as himself.

Spiders sometimes exhibit wonderful strength, especially in conflict. There is a spider in Java that is the dread of all other insects, and it makes a web that can hardly be cut with a knife. With spiders size is not always a measure of strength, but this fellow has both bulk and power.

One writer states that an ordinary ant can carry ten times its own weight. Personally I have seen them do far more than this.—L. E. Eubanks, in *Our Dumb Animals.*

GOLD AND SILVER AND DEAD MEN'S BONES

by Karl G. Bradshaw

CHAPTER ONE

EMIL MONTAGUE, private detective, had decided to take a vacation. That fact in itself don't sound especially interesting, but—well, be patient.

For nearly two months, assisted more or less by the local police, he had been working on an exceptionally difficult case. The police had been discouraged from the start, but Montague had hung on with that dogged determination which was characteristic of the man—a determination which usually produced results and had made him an object of envy in police circles, as well as won the everlasting fear and respect of all lawbreakers who ventured within his field of action.

In the case alluded to his persistence had at last been rewarded by the discovery of an almost infinitesimal clue, which swiftly developed to such an extent as to seemingly justify the arrest of two notorious crooks, "Silky" O'Connor and Anthony Brown, known to the underworld as "Red Anthony."

The evidence against the two men was not conclusive by any means. They stubbornly denied their guilt, but Montague seldom made a mistake.

"Put the screws on," he advised, "and they'll weaken in a day or so."

"But what if they don't?" asked the chief. "We can't hold them long on so little evidence, you know."

"Keep them a week or two, anyway. They won't mind it; jail is home to them. In the meantime I'm going out to Rushville to visit an old friend for a few days. I'm tired out, and I need a little rest. Hold these two birds till I get back. If nothing has developed by that time I'll take the case up again. Just simply got to knock off for a while; my nerves are going ragged."

An hour later Montague sighed relievedly as he dropped into the upholstered depths of a seat in the smoker of the west-bound express.

In a few minutes the train started, and almost before he realized it he was gazing sleepily and contentedly through the window at a rushing panorama of country scenery.

"At last," he mused, "I'm going to get a rest." He yawned and stretched himself on the seat as best he could. "Gee, but I'm frazzled!" Then he fell asleep.

"Rushville!" bellowed the conductor.

Though it had been nearly three hours, it seemed to Montague that only a moment

had elapsed since he had boarded the train. Grip in hand, he stepped out on the station platform. He was hardly awake.

Rushville, a sleepy little town of about five thousand inhabitants, was almost surrounded by ranges of blue-brown hills. It was an ideal place to recuperate after a period of severe nervous tension like the one to which Montague had been recently subjected.

The crisp air was stimulating, and the detective inhaled to the full capacity of his lungs. His step quickened as he made his way toward the centre of the town. He was again thoroughly awake.

"Hello, there, Emil!" called a strong, cheery voice.

He looked across the street and saw a man coming eagerly toward him. It was his friend Doctor Langley. Soon they were shaking hands and exchanging greetings.

"Just came down to take a little vacation," explained Montague when they were comfortably seated in Langley's office. "You invited me, you know," he added.

"Sure I did," agreed Langley. "Meant it, too. Fact is I've been waiting for a long time for you to grow weary of metropolitan excitement. I knew that you would finally develop a craving for the peace and quiet of little old Rushville again. That's the only time you ever come around."

"Too confounded busy to come often. If circumstances would permit I'd be here all the time. You'd better be thankful it's the way it is," he laughed. "By the way, how's rabbit hunting?"

"They say it's good; never been out myself; don't get time. You see, I'm coroner here now, and of course that's a hot job. An old woman took carbolic acid over in Murphy's Hollow last summer. That was my first and last official case. I pronounced her dead, and that settled her hash. She's dead yet."

"Don't you think she's been dead long enough to decently justify you in going hunting with me?" Montague inquired soberly.

"Not so sure about it," said the doctor. "There's a man in this town who was completely disgraced by going fishing in less than a year after his wife died. Don't know just how the Ladies' Aid Society would take it if I should venture to shoulder a gun at this time. Remember, this is 'Main street' and the Ladies' Aid sits in judgment. Might help some if I should wear crape."

"Rushville must be a queer place!" Emil was convulsed with mirth.

"It is," agreed his friend, "but no queerer than most small towns. They are all ruled by the Ladies' Aid and the sewing societies. Of course the Corner Grocery Whittlers' Association has a little influence."

"Then you think you won't dare go?"

"Oh, yes, I'll chance it; that is, unless that old lady comes to life or somebody else takes a fool notion to commit suicide. I guess I can regain my reputation at the next pie supper."

CHAPTER TWO

NINE miles east of Rushville, about three hundred yards from a lonely road, nestles a dilapidated log cabin. It is the home of old Ben Miller, who is a hermit and a miser.

As the soil in the vicinity is so extremely poor that nobody dare depend on it for a livelihood, Miller's nearest neighbor lives a mile away. This suits the old man perfectly, for, like most hermits, he scorned companionship. For twenty years he had lived thus, and in the last ten years not a foot other than his own had stepped upon his threshold.

During the summer months he gathered roots and herbs, which he shipped to a distant market. In the winter he hunted and trapped the fur-bearing animals common to the locality. By economizing to the point of self-sacrifice he was able to exist and regularly deposit small amounts of gold and silver coin in the sheepskin bag which he concealed beneath the soiled and worn mattress of his rickety old bed.

On the same day Montague arrived at Rushville the recluse had received payment for a shipment of furs, and that night he

added forty-five dollars to his slowly growing hoard. It was time to count it again.

"Seventy-five, eighty, eighty-five, ninety, one hundred," chanted old Ben as he dropped the shining coins on the rough, bare boards of the table. At the count of one hundred he pushed the money back and continued:

"Five, fifteen, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty-five, seventy-five, eighty." He paused.

The bag was empty, but the table was covered with small heaps of money. Each heap, with the exception of the last, contained the exact sum of one hundred dollars.

"That's all," he sighed. His faded blue eyes surveyed the money greedily. "Four thousand, seven hundred and eighty dollars!"

The smoky oil lamp flickered fitfully and strange shadows flitted grotesquely about the log walls of the room. Outside the wind howled dismally through the tops of nearby trees. The doors and windows rattled ominously. A night bird gave voice to its weird, unearthly cry.

With a bony, vulture-like hand the miser scooped his treasure into the yawning mouth of the sheepskin bag. No sooner had the last handful of coins disappeared from view than a knock sounded on the door.

With surprising agility old Ben darted to the bed and, lifting the mattress, deposited the bag on the slats beneath. Then he seized a sawed-off shotgun and faced the door in wild-eyed alarm. His breath rasped between his tobacco-stained teeth.

Again came the knock, this time more violent.

"Who's there?" in a dry, high-pitched voice. He pulled both hammers of the gun to full cock. His lean fingers nervously twitched against the triggers.

"It is I—a traveler." The deep-toned voice was calm and unruffled.

"What d'ye want?"

"I want to borrow a lantern. Engine went bad on the road over there and can't see to fix it. Saw your light and thought I might get a lantern here."

"Are ye sure it's a lantern ye want?" The old man's voice was a trifle less tense.

"Certainly."

"Well, I ain't got any."

"You haven't?" The hermit heard an almost inaudible curse. "I'd give five dollars for a light."

"Are ye dead sure it's a light ye want?"

"Why, of course!" impatiently. "What do you suppose I would want around such a place as this?"

"Dunno," vaguely. "You say you'll give five dollars for a light?"

"That's what I said."

"Well, listen. I've got a double-barreled shotgun, and she's loaded."

"Yes, go on."

"I've got it pointed toward that door, and I've got it cocked. If you try any funny business I'll let you have both barrels." There was an uneasy shuffling of feet on the outside. "As I said," resumed old Ben, "I ain't got no lantern, but I've got a flashlight."

"Just the thing."

"All right then. You slip your five through that hole in the bottom of the door. Then you step back and I'll poke the flashlight out. But, mind ye, no funny business."

"Very well, anything for a light. However, I must say you're a cautious old cuss. Be careful with that cannon." A brief silence, then: "Here she comes, Shylock. Is that satisfactory? I can't see what I'm giving you."

Miller advanced and picked up the money. It was a ten-dollar note, but he pocketed it without remark. Taking a small flashlight from a cluttered shelf, he pushed it through the hole in the door.

"Much obliged, Shylock," said the unseen stranger.

"Take it and go," growled Miller, "and don't come foolin' around here again unless you want a dose of buckshot."

A light laugh, accompanied by the sound of retreating footsteps, was the only reply.

The old man stepped to the window and pulled aside the faded green blind. He could see a small white light bobbing off across the field. When it reached the road

it came to a halt and shifted about there for a considerable length of time. At last the glaring headlights of an automobile pierced the darkness and the sound of a running motor came to the watcher's ears.

"Funny," muttered the recluse. "What's an automobile doin' away back here at this time of night, I wonder? That feller must have wanted a light mighty bad. He thought it was a five, though," he chuckled.

The machine moved slowly over the rough road and stopped again after going about a quarter of a mile. If it had gone fifty yards farther it would have disappeared from the view of the old man at the window and—but it didn't. He had carefully drawn the blind, leaving just a little crack to peer through, so small and so faint a light that it was perhaps indiscernible to the occupant or occupants of the automobile. The night was so dark that in such a case it would have been impossible for the motorist to tell whether or not his light could still be seen from the cabin. It may not have occurred to anybody that the hermit would probably watch. Anyway, users of the most meticulous care sometimes make ruinous mistakes.

When the car stopped the motor was shut off and the headlights went out. All was darkness for a minute or two. Then the flashlight was brought into play, and in another minute or two moved off across a field on the far side of the road and vanished up a thicketed hollow.

"Funny—mighty funny," reiterated old Ben.

The hour must have been near midnight, but he had no thought of sleep. He felt certain that something most unusual was taking place. So, regardless of the passing of time, he held his position at the window. How long he stood there he had no idea, but it seemed like a matter of hours. His bones ached and his old muscles cramped. The fire burned low in the sheet-iron stove and the room grew cold. The wind howled on.

At last, his patience exhausted, he left the window, donned a greasy felt hat, picked up the sawed-off shotgun, made sure that it was loaded, unlocked the door, stepped out, locked the door from the outside and disappeared into the impenetrable gloom.

CHAPTER THREE

THE next day it rained incessantly until three o'clock in the afternoon. Montague spent most of the day in lounging about Langley's office.

"Looks like I'm going to have a beautiful vacation," he remarked as he gazed morosely through the window.

"Does look a little blue," agreed the doctor. "But cheer up, I believe it will quit before night."

In less than an hour the rain ceased and the temperature began to drop.

"Didn't I tell you?" boasted Langley. "I'm some prophet. Let me further predict that it'll be as cold as Greenland before morning."

Again the doctor prophesied correctly. The temperature reached the freezing point before dark and continued to fall slowly throughout the night. The morning dawned cold and clear.

"Guess we may as well take that little hunt to-day," Montague suggested after they had finished breakfasting. "How about it?"

"A little cold, but I'm willing and anxious," replied Langley. "May not have a better day."

"Know of a good place to go?"

"You bet I do! I know of a place where rabbits are the only things there except —that is, there is nothing else only an old hermit, and he don't count. Thousands of acres filled with rabbits."

"My enthusiasm waxeth warm. Lead me to this rabbit hunter's paradise!" cried Emil dramatically.

They had breakfasted early, and just as the red rim of the sun pushed its way above the eastern horizon the doctor's machine, carrying the two men in hunting togs, rolled out of Rushville.

Ben Miller was chopping wood in front of his cabin when an automobile came around a bend in the road and halted at al-

most the precise spot where the machine of the night before had made its second stop.

"Now I wonder who that kin be?" muttered the hermit uneasily.

Two men alighted from the car. It was Langley and Montague, resplendent in new hunting regalia and armed with shotguns

The old man, who appeared rather the worse for wear, watched them suspiciously. His eyes were bloodshot and the hand which gripped the axe-handle trembled. When the two men started across the field in the direction of the hollow on the other side of the road he flung the axe aside and fled to the security of his cabin.

"Sure is a wild-looking place," remarked Montague as they entered a thicket. "Ought to be a lot of game around here."

"There is," assured his companion. "If we don't kill more than we can carry it will be our own fault. I've been here before. Tramp that brush over there. Bet there's a rabbit as big as a sheep under it."

Though entirely unaware of anything of the sort, that great, unseen power which so often seems to take a hand in the important affairs of life must have been directing their minds and movements.

They were walking some distance apart when Montague stepped aside to tramp the brush referred to by Langley. Suddenly he stopped as if petrified in his tracks. His face paled.

"What's wrong!" cried the doctor, alarmed at his friend's strange appearance.

"Come here and see." Emil's voice had an odd sound. "Another official job for you, I think."

Even the hardened nerves of a doctor are sometimes susceptible to shock. An expression of morbid horror took possession of Langley's features when his eyes fell upon the gruesome spectacle.

"A dead man!" he gasped.

"And an open grave," added his companion. "But the grave is not big enough for that man. The one who dug it evidently made a mistake in his measurements. Perhaps that is the reason he didn't finish the job." He smiled cynically.

"My God, man!" exclaimed Langley. "How can you joke under such circumstances?"

"A long face won't bring this fellow to life."

The detective, his professional instinct coming to the fore, stooped over and made a short examination of the body. A ring of rather curious design ornamented the little finger of the left hand. Montague's face lighted up. He pushed the hair of the corpse back and revealed a long scar on the forehead.

"What do you make of it?" asked Langley.

"I know him. If I'm not mistaken, this is all that remains of Jim Becker, one of the slickest cracksmen in the United States. That ring is the emblem of a famous organization of crooks. He's shot through the heart—a clear case of homicide. But who did it?"

Langley watched interestedly while Montague searched for a possible clue to the identity of the killer.

The victim's pockets contained nothing but a watch, a pocket-knife and a purse. In the purse was approximately seventy-five dollars in cash. After replacing these articles he turned his attention to the ground about the body. There had been a great deal of tramping done in the immediate vicinity, but most of the tracks had been nearly obliterated by the recent rainfall. In the dirt thrown up from the excavation, however, a number of tracks were distinctly visible. By their variation in size Montague at once discerned that they had been made by the feet of two or three different men. He stooped and peered into the hole. A box of some description had rested there, for he could see the impression its bottom had left in the waxy clay.

"How long has he been dead?" he suddenly inquired of Langley. Then, without waiting for a reply, he strode a few yards into some small undergrowth. Something there had caught his eye. It was a thirty-eight caliber revolver. The cylinder contained four loaded cartridges and one empty shell. His intuition told him it belonged to the dead man. Tossing the weapon on the upturned earth, he faced the

doctor, who had now completed his examination.

"Well, how about it?"

"Been dead not more than twelve hours, I should judge. Anyway, it happened since the rain; the clothing is dry."

"So I noticed." Montague knit his brow in puzzled thought. "There is something about this I can't quite get the hang of," he said. "The killing was undoubtedly done last night, but part of this work was done at an earlier date; night before last probably. As you can see, a few scattered clods of that dirt have been rained on. The rest is fresh, except for freezing. Some of the footprints are fresh and some are not. The only things that seem to be entirely clear are that Jim Becker is dead and that my vacation is ruined. The first don't especially matter; the chair awaited him anyway. But I do hate like thunder to have my vacation spoiled."

"You intend to follow the case up?"

"Yes. What else could I do under the circumstances? I could never leave things this way and rest; I've had the habit too long. I guess you will also have a little work to attend to—your second official case." Montague smiled slightly.

"I'll never complain about the dullness of business again." The doctor grimaced. "What shall we do first?"

"While you're attending to your official duties as coroner I'll hang around this neck of the woods and do some investigating. Perhaps I'll make a social call on the hermit over there."

"You don't think he had a hand in this?"

"I'm venturing no guesses as yet."

As the two men made their way back to where they had left the machine Montague scanned the ground in search of footprints. Due to the freezing weather of the past night, the surface was hard and unyielding, but his trained eye discerned three faint, undistinct trails. All were close together and crossed at intervals. About midway between the road and the thicket he observed a spot where the dead grass and weeds had been crushed and pressed down by some heavy object.

The doctor's self-starter gave him trouble. While he was fussing with it the detective was making an examination of the road. He found where an automobile had turned around, but the track had been made before the rain. Then he discovered where another machine had evidently remained in a stationary position for some time. It had been dripping oil. Though showing but faintly on the frozen road, the trail of the pneumatic tires was fresh and led straight ahead.

"Guess I'll walk out on the road a little ways," he told Langley, who had turned his car around and was ready to go.

"All right. Suppose you'll be here when we come after the body."

"Yes, unless something unforeseen occurs."

CHAPTER FOUR

AFTER the doctor had started Montague walked briskly in the opposite direction.

As Langley had told him that the road became impassable a little farther on, he would have felt no surprise at finding an automobile stranded in a mudhole. But he was somewhat surprised, however, when he walked around a sharp bend and saw one turned upsidedown on the side of an embankment. The machine was jammed against a tree, which had probably prevented it from turning over a number of times, for the bank was high and steep.

The detective quickly ascertained that the wrecked car was deserted. After a short search he discovered marks left by some heavy object which had been dragged to the foot of the embankment and into the bushes.

Montague at once decided to follow the trail. When he had penetrated the thicket to a distance of fifty yards there came the sudden report of a revolver and a bullet whistled uncomfortably near.

Quick as a flash Emil ducked behind a convenient tree and drew the automatic which he invariably carried. Another bullet grooved the side of the tree just as he suc-

ceeded in placing it between himself and the would-be killer.

Montague had caught a fleeting glimpse of the man and knew exactly where he stood. He was partly concealed by a clump of blackberry briers. That the man, whoever he might be, was shooting with intent to kill, the detective had not the slightest doubt. Therefore, he did not hesitate about returning the fire. It seemed to be a case of life against life.

Peering around the tree, he took a hurried aim at the clump of briers. There was a double report, and a bullet from the enemy's gun fanned his cheek. Both had missed. He was preparing to try again when a small piece of bark, chipped from the tree by another bullet, struck his left ear with a sharp sting.

"Whew!" exclaimed Emil, "that fellow knows how to shoot."

Twice in rapid succession the detective's automatic spoke. As the last shot sounded the man behind the briers sprang to his feet, threw up his hands and, with a groan, crumpled to the ground. The duel was over.

The man was hard hit, but not dead, when Emil reached him. He had fell face downward, and when the detective turned him over he was bleeding a little at the mouth. He was conscious.

"You got me that time, Montague," he said weakly. "I recognized you when I saw you coming through the bushes. I knew the jig was up unless I could pick you off." He coughed and spat out a mouthful of blood. "I'd get you yet, damn you, if I'd only held onto my gun when I went down."

"I'm sorry I had to shoot you, Brown," said Emil. "I guess I saved you from the chair, however. I don't think you'll deny that you killed a man in Pittsburg."

"No. What's the use now? I'm going over the river in a few minutes." He coughed again. "I heard you got the guys who cracked the Second National," he remarked with a grin. "I supposed you'd be taking it easy now instead of nosing around after innocents like me and Jim Becker."

"Coincidence," briefly explained the detective. He removed his hunting coat, folded it and placed it under the head of the dying crook. "Now, go ahead and tell me what you know."

"About what?"

"About Jim Becker back there by that hole and everything connected with it."

"I never was a squealer," said the crook, "but I guess the story won't hurt anybody. Becker's dead and I soon will be. On the other hand, it may help a couple of guys who used to be pals of mine. If nobody but you was concerned, I'd see you in hell before I'd tell you anything."

"Let's have the story." Montague knew Brown would soon be past telling anything.

"To begin with, you pinched the wrong men for that bank robbery. Me and Becker done the job." He strangled and spat more blood. "I've got to make it short," he said faintly.

"Fearing arrest for another piece of work, we decided to bury the bank loot for safe keeping. I had been here before, and I suggested this place because of its isolation. We got it out here night before last and buried it back yonder where you saw that hole. Our engine went bad, and we were forced to leave it at the Rushville garage for repairs. We put up at the hotel there. As you know, it rained all day yesterday, so we stayed in our room. Anyway, we learned that you were in town, and we didn't care to run the risk of meeting you on the street. The garage man failed to repair our flivver yesterday. We decided to spend the night at the hotel. We slept in the same bed, and before I had been asleep long I awoke and found Becker gone. I at once suspected that he was trying to double-cross me. Hurriedly dressing, I went out and saw a car standing in front of the drugstore across the street. I took it. When I got out here Becker had just succeeded in lifting the chest from the hole. He must have been so interested that he failed to hear my motor. I don't know how he got there, for there was no other machine about. Neither could I figure out what he intended to do with the chest, as he had no way to haul it. Anyway, there he was, and I seen red when I saw him trying

to get away with the loot. Well, I beat him on the draw, but I gave him a chance. He fired once and missed.

"I had a deuce of a time lugging that chest to the road. It seemed heavier than when we buried it there. I don't know how I ever managed the trick."

He was desperately gasping for air, but he continued:

"There is little more to tell. Something went wrong with the steering gear out there. When the machine went over I think my head must have struck a tree. It was coming daylight when I recovered consciousness. I finally regained sufficient strength to drag the chest down here. I was preparing to bury it again when you arrived. It's right over there. I was going to use that brush to hide the job."

He fumbled weakly at his clothing. "Here's—the—key," he said, almost in a whisper. "I'm going—now." The death pallor was spreading over his face. With sudden energy he struggled to a sitting posture and cried in a voice surprisingly strong and clear: "Damn you, Montague, damn you!" Then he sank quietly down. When Emil felt for his pulse he found it had ceased to beat.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and by that law the act had been entirely justified. But even at that Montague experienced an uncomfortable feeling of regret at having taken the crook's life. Whatever the circumstances, it is ever thus, and it is this inevitable regret which sometimes leads us to doubt whether self-preservation really is the first law of nature. Be it as it may, until humanity is able to penetrate the wall of fog which separates this world from the mysteries beyond the law must and will stand.

With the dying man's curse still ringing in his ears, the detective looked for the chest, which he soon found beside a heap of freshly thrown earth. Inserting the key, he gave a twist and the lock snapped open. He lifted the lid. After removing some old rags which had evidently been used for packing, he discovered—a mass of scrap-iron!

CHAPTER FIVE

MONTAGUE looked at his watch and found that less than two hours had passed since he and Langley had left Rushville early that morning. Things were moving swiftly.

Realizing that Langley would probably not return for a time yet, he decided to visit old Ben Miller, the hermit.

The situation remained puzzling. He did not doubt that the dying crook had been sincere in his belief that the oak chest contained the bank loot. The fact that it did not only served to increase his determination to find the money. Furthermore he was somewhat chagrined by his error in placing the wrong men under arrest for the robbery.

When a hundred yards distant from the cabin Montague saw the recluse pull down the window blind. He was not anticipating a very hearty welcome, for Langley had told him about the old man's eccentricities. He knocked on the door.

"What do ye want?" demanded the hermit's cracked voice.

"I want to speak to you concerning an important matter."

"You git out uh here!" snarled old Ben. "Leave my palace at once."

"Palace!" said the detective to himself. "Is the old devil crazy?" Then aloud: "I'm a detective. I represent the law, and I command you to open that door."

"Law? Who says law to me, King Tutankhamen, pharaoh of Egypt? I'm the law. Who dares command me to do anything? Go away and leave me in peace or I'll have ye put in exile on th' moon."

Montague was momentarily nonplused. Without a doubt the old man was raving mad. Under the circumstances he realized that it would be dangerous to try to force an entrance into the cabin. Therefore he decided to change his tactics.

"Oh, come on," he urged genially; "let's be sociable. I have an important message for you from King Solomon."

"Tell King Solomon to go to thunder! I know what he's up to. He's plottin' to steal my throne. But he can't do it.

Ha! ha! ha! He can't do it! Here's my answer to King Solomon."

The hermit's insane words were immediately followed by a breaking of glass. A round object of some sort crashed through the window and fell upon the ground. It was the grinning skull of a human skeleton!

"My God!" gasped Emil at sight of the ghastly thing. "I wonder what will happen next?"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed the madman. "Take that to King Solomon. Tell him there's more where that come from. Tell him King Tutankhamen is rich in gold and silver and dead men's bones." He seemed to be growing wilder with each passing moment, and Montague had almost abandoned the idea of entering the cabin. Suddenly the lock clicked and the door swung open. "Welcome to th' palace of th' great pharaoh. Behold with your own eyes th' wealth and glory of Tutankhamen."

The picture that confronted the detective's vision when the door opened was one that would always linger unpleasantly in his memory. The hermit had discarded all of his clothing except his shirt. His long hair was tousled and his bearded lips were drawn back in a snarling smile of welcome, which exposed two rows of snaggly yellow teeth. His pale eyes flamed with the terrible light of utter insanity.

"Enter the tomb of Tutankhamen," said the creature. "My tomb is my castle. They say my tomb has been discovered, but it's a lie. You're th' first to find it, and you'll never leave it alive. Nobody'll ever find my tomb and steal my mummy. Me and you'll be mummies together. Come!" He beckoned with a claw-like hand.

If Montague's nerves had contained less iron he would have beat a hasty retreat. As it was he decided to accept the invitation. He was a strong man and believed he could overpower the demented hermit if necessary. So he entered.

Two boards had been lifted from the centre of the cabin floor. Near the gap was a tightly nailed box. The bones of a human skeleton were scattered over the floor.

"Whose bones are these?" inquired Emil.

"The bones of th' man I killed fifteen years ago," replied the maniac. "I thought he had money, but he didn't! I buried him under them boards, and nobody ever knowed. They say murder will out, but it won't. Ha, ha! When I dug his bones up they'd turned to gold. Gold and silver and dead men's bones!"

The detective shivered. "What's in that box?"

"Money—gold and silver and bills. Two fools buried it in a thicket. I seen 'em do it, and when they was gone I dug it up. I filled their old box with iron and buried it again. That's not all. I got a sheepskin bag full besides. I'm goin' to bury th' box with th' gold bones. Not even King Solomon kin find th' treasure of Tutankhamen. Me and you'll be mummies together."

Montague had been thoroughly on guard from the time he had entered the cabin. But he was not quick enough to prevent the sudden spring which carried the madman to the corner where rested the sawed-off shotgun. For a second things looked bad for the detective. Old Ben moved with such lightning-like swiftness that it would be impossible to reach him before he could bring the gun into play. There was the automatic which had never failed him, but he didn't relish the idea of killing a crazy man. Besides, one life in one day was enough. All this raced through his mind in one brief second. He hardly knew what to do.

The hermit snatched the gun up and swung the muzzle so that it pointed directly at Montague, who glimpsed death in the twin steel tubes.

"Bang! Bang!" The maniac had fired both barrels.

At just the proper time the detective had flung his body prostrate upon the floor. The double charge of lead had passed harmlessly overhead.

With the idea of grappling with the old man before he could have time to reload Emil sprang to his feet. He was temporarily deafened by the report, and the room was filled with smoke from the black powder. With outstretched hands he blindly groped for the madman. His toe col-

lided with some object on the floor, and he fell sprawling. It was the hermit.

Before the smoke had cleared away Montague had ascertained that the old man was dead. In the maddened frenzy of the moment something somewhere had snapped, and the result had been instantly fatal.

With a hatchet which he found lying on the floor he pried the cover from the box. Sure enough, it contained the bank loot.

For a minute or so the detective gazed silently at the money, the dead recluse and the bones upon the floor. Then he walked to the door and stepped outside.

The sun was shining. Countless birds were twittering a welcome to the fast approaching springtime. A quarter of a mile away he could see a number of men emerging from a little thicketed hollow. He knew the gruesome nature of the burden they were bearing in their midst. Some of the men seemed excited, and Emil vaguely wondered how excited they would be before the day was over. What would the Ladies' Aid and the Corner Grocery Whittlers' Association have to say? He almost smiled at the thought.

"Gold and silver and dead men's bones!" he muttered aloud. "God! what a vacation!"

ARRESTED AS A BANDIT

A BUSINESS career in Cincinnati that netted luxury and high prestige in social circles was built up on spoils of a hold-up in St. Louis, Mo., Sept. 14, 1921, according to the story told by police officials. One of the bandits has confessed, they say. His name, as listed by the police, is Eugene Remy. In Cincinnati he was known as Frank Berg, proprietor of a café, and owner of a residence at Norwood, a fashionable suburb.

The police trail of Remy lasted a year and a half. He was arrested in the Ohio city recently. Business men, whose friendship Remy gained in the past eighteen months, were said to have made strong efforts to halt his extradition.

Remy's arrest followed the chance discovery of a scar on one side of his face by a Cincinnati Bertillon expert. "Berg" exposed himself to the expert in reporting the theft of a diamond ring and scarfpin, and went to the police station to try to identify some suspects.

Remy is said to have admitted he was one of the four bandits who held up John Hellems, a negro bank messenger, on a street car, with "an empty revolver," and by prearrangement with the messenger the latter handed over his satchel containing $14,000 to the men, two of whom are under arrest.

Remy said he was "double-crossed" by the leader of the bandits, who gave him only $700 instead of $3,500 as promised. He added that he went to Cincinnati immediately after the robbery and opened the café.

Eugene Remy, or Frank Berg, as he was known in Cininnati and Norwood, was arrested on March 9, after he had called at police headquarters and complained that he had been held up and robbed.

Remy conducted a soft drink café and restaurant in Cincinnati. He apparently was a man of integrity, a hard worker and successful in his business. Several business men in the vicinity of the café were daily patrons at the lunch hour, and through them Remy extended his acquaintance. He purchased a beautiful home in Norwood and lived there until arrested.

Self-Identification of Criminals

By CARL H. GETZ.

A CERTAIN forger who is to-day serving the fifth year of a nine-year sentence in a certain Eastern penitentiary was being brought to New York to act as witness in a criminal case. He was accompanied by a guard from the prison and the detective who brought about his arrest.

"Tell me," said the prisoner to the detective, "how you were able to hang the New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington cases all on me? I always thought I was a pretty smooth guy. But you hung the bee on me all right. How did you do it?"

"Well," said the detective, inasmuch as you will be arrested the day you step out of jail and will immediately be prosecuted for other crimes you have committed, I will tell you. There is little likelihood that I will tell you anything that will make it possible for you to be a cleverer crook when you get out, because you are not going to get out."

The prisoner half-smiled at these remarks, but listened attentively.

"You thought you were clever," went on the detective. "Well, you were, but you weren't clever enough. You identified yourself."

"What do you mean?" spoke up the prisoner quickly, while the guard listened, too.

"Write your name," said the detective, as he gave a piece of paper and a pencil to the forger. "Don't write your real name, but the one you were using when I had you arrested."

The prisoner wrote "Arthur Wentworth."

"Now write 'Arthur Wright,'" said the detective.

Again the prisoner did as he was told.

"Now write 'Arthur Merton,'" continued the detective.

The prisoner wrote the third name.

"Now look at these signatures," said the detective. "Notice that little hook on the line which crosses the letter 't'."

"That was from the juggling of the train," said the prisoner. "I don't do that always. Let me see the other signatures."

The detective triumphantly spread the three signatures before the prisoner. Each line crossing a 't' had a little hook on it."

"Well, I'll be damned," muttered the prisoner as he pulled off his hat and scratched his head.

"That little hook was the one clue we had with which to trail you," said the detective. "But it was enough. Your handwriting was analyzed, and we discovered that you had a faculty of changing your writing to such an extent that any analysis of it was worthless, with the one exception that you always made that hook. And that is why we knew that these various cases in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York were all done by the same man."

And so the crook learned the story of self-identification.

Charles F. Robb, head of the criminal division of the William J. Burns International Detective Agency, Inc., and one of the keenest students of criminology in this country, tells of a forger who wrote all his checks for $98.50 on a check writer. That man became known to the police and to bank detectives as the "$98.50" man. There was no other clue, but that one was enough. Later he was arrested, and it was learned that he owned a check writer and that it would write but one amount, $98.50. For some reason that crook never had the brains to buy another check writer.

Mr. Robb tells of another forger whose

handwriting was most difficult to analyze, but who did have the mannerism of making very heavy dots. That man became known as the black-dot man. That was the only clue that bank detectives had, but it was enough.

W. L. Barnhart, of the forgery bond department of the National Surety Company, who has made an intensive study of forgery in all its ramifications, probably has more stories about the self-identification of criminals than any other man in America. Mr. Barnhart tells this one:

A man goes into a bank, explains he is about to move to the city, that he has an option of office space, but that before he moves he would like to get acquainted with a responsible lawyer who can handle some legal matters for him. The average bank, eager to get a new account, gives the man the name of the lawyer and frequently a card or letter of introduction. Man goes to lawyer, tells the same story he told to the bank and then says he has several notes to collect, but that for the time being he will be content with trying to collect a note for $4,000. He explains that he knows the people are perfectly good and that he dislikes to have to resort to legal means to collect the note, but the truth is, so he says, he needs money badly.

That afternoon the lawyer sends a letter to a near-by town to the person whose name the man gave him. In the meantime the man—crook we will call him—goes to this town, obtains this letter and proceeds to answer it to the effect that he was always good for the money, that Mr. So-and-so knew that, but that he didn't have the decency to give him a little more time. However, rather than make trouble he encloses what is supposed to be a certified check for $4,000. And the letter ends with this sentence:

"I do hope you will stick Mr. So-and-so a good fat fee. And just to make sure you get your money we are making the check payable to you."

The next day the crook calls at the lawyer's office to inquire whether he has had any success in collecting that So-and-so note. The lawyer then produces the certified check.

"Why, this is fine," says the crook? "I wonder whether you can cash this for me."

"Well, hardly," says the lawyer. "How do I know that the check is any good?"

"That's true," replied the crook. "But I tell you what we can do. You give me a check; by the way, how much is your fee?"

"One hundred dollars," answers the lawyer.

"That's reasonable," says the crook. "You give me a check for $3,900 and predate it four or five days, which will give ample time for the check to clear. Then if the check is no good you are out nothing."

And the crook smiled as if it was a joke that any one should even intimate the check could not be good.

That sounded all right to the lawyer, so he wrote out a good check made payable to the crook and predated five days. The crook took the check and departed. He then went to his hotel room, used a bit of ink eradicator and changed the date on the check. He then returned to the original bank, saw the man who gave him the letter of introduction to the lawyer, and through him had the check cashed.

In the meantime the lawyer deposits his check, and a few days later it comes back marked "no account." The lawyer immediately notifies the bank to stop payment on check, and the bank notifies the lawyer that the check has already been cashed. The lawyer then learns that the date of his check has been changed, and inasmuch as the signature on the check is genuine he is the loser.

Now this same crook played this same game with certain variations. One time he went into a bank, said that his brother, a manufacturer of steam shovels, had just died and that he was trying to settle up his estate. He said that while going through his brother's papers he came across a memorandum to the effect that such and such a company of such and such a place had purchased a steam shovel, but that as far as he was able to learn the shovel was never paid

for. The crook asked the bank officer whether he could help him.

The bank wrote a letter, which the crook himself obtained and answered. In his reply, written on the stationery of what appeared to be that of an engineering company, he said that his firm had purchased a steam shovel, but that when it was received it was found out of order and that for that reason payment was postponed. But now that the shovel was in good running order the company was mailing a certified check for $2,790.90, less $119.90, the amount of the cost of repairs.

The next day the crook drops into the bank to learn whether anything has been heard from that so-and-so company. The bank produces the check.

"Will you telephone Main 6767, So-and-so, and make sure that check is all right, because if it is I want to cash it," says the crook.

And the bank officer, who should have known enough to look up in the telephone directory whether the number was actually the bank on which the check was drawn, called up the number, was told it was the bank and in a moment was talking, so he supposed, to the cashier of the bank, who assured him that the check was good. And so the check was cashed. Later when the check came back marked "no account," the bank officer decided to telephone the bank again, looked up the name in the phone directory and discovered that originally he had never talked to the bank. Investigation revealed that the number he got was a hall telephone.

Self-identification, while particularly common among forgers, is equally common among all classes of criminals. For example, there is a gang of burglars which keeps under cover until the nights before holidays, when there is usually noise and less vigilance than usual, although there ought to be more. In the middle West recently the police had no other clues to a gang of "yeggs" other than they committed all of their crimes on nights before holidays or Saturday nights. When arrested there was no positive evidence that the same gang was responsible for seven different crimes. But the police made a bluff at it and accused the gang of all the crimes. Curiously enough the men admitted their guilt.

There is a bank sneak thief who works with a confederate in this fashion: His confederate, a woman, drives up to the bank in an automobile and by her side has a crutch. She calls into the bank, and usually—this always takes place in a small town—one of the tellers leaves the cage. While he is absent the crook inside the bank gets busy with a cane, fishing out as much money out of the cage as he is able. When the teller returns to the bank the crook leaves and gets into the automobile and speeds away. The point of this incident is that this criminal had only this one plan. He worked it over and over again, and although the police could get no adequate description of either the man or the woman, the criminal was identified by the method he used. In other words, he identified himself.

New York detectives tell of an old-time operative who used this interesting method of identifying criminals. This man operated before the days of prohibition, and his little trick was easy in a saloon, while it would be difficult to-day on the street. If this detective was not sure of his man he would go up to him and greet him something like this:

"Well, if it isn't my old friend Bill Cartwright." And he would beam all over.

"Sorry," said the other man. "My name isn't Cartwright. My name is Arthur Wellington."

"You don't say so," said the detective. "Well, in that case you are just the man I am looking for."

And a minute later the two would be headed for the police headquarters.

Rarely did the criminal give an assumed name. Thrown completely off his guard, he gave his right name.

That's another example of self-identification.

Hotel detectives use self-identification to great advantage in their work. For example, there is the crook who sends a suit to a valet, and then when he receives it telephones the valet he has the wrong suit.

Now, the wise valet will ask the guest where his suit was made, and in that case the guest is stumped. But usually the valet doesn't think that fast and instead carries five or six suits to the guest's room, and the crook proceeds to take his pick. Later some one else is sore because his suit is gone, and usually there is a lot of annoyance and trouble all around. Such a crook is a nuisance, and while a valet usually can't describe the man the method is the means which the police use to find and arrest him.

There is another type of hotel crook who hangs around the clerk's desk, and while no one is supposed to be looking, picks up a key or two, goes to the rooms and scoops up everything he can get his hands on quickly. It is a fact that that type of crook sticks to the one method. And that one method is always the means by which he is caught.

A study of crime and the records of criminals will convince any one that it is impossible for a person to commit a crime without leaving a clue of some kind. That clue may be nothing more than a method, but while it may escape the eyes of the laymen, it rarely escapes the trained detective.

CAMERA TRAPS A SPIRIT

THERE are a great many people who claim to have photographed spirits of the dead. But the latest is a mere child who could not possibly resort to trickery.

Mrs. Mary Haug, of Newark, is convinced she has a spirit picture. Her belief is strengthened, she says, since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle came to America.

"On September 5, 1920," Mrs. Haug said, "we had a party at our home to celebrate the fifth birthday of our daughter, Isabella. With a $2 camera, which had been presented to Isabella, I took a picture standing on the steps of the porch.

"I had that roll of film developed at the corner drug store, and when I looked at the film and print I was astonished to see in the lower left-hand corner a portrait of my uncle, William Henry Vreeland, who had died ten years before.

"Certain details strengthened my belief that it was a spirit photograph. My uncle had died from the effects of an accident. His right hand had been torn off in a machine." Here she pointed at the picture.

"You will notice that the right hand is missing in the picture and that he is propped up on pillows very much as he was in the City Hospital before he died. I could see that it was my uncle. He had the same kind of beard.

"Not believing my own eyes, I took the picture to my aunt, his widow, Mrs. Mary Vreeland. As soon as she saw the picture she recognized it as her husband.

"I wish I could tell you what that picture meant to me. It meant new soul life, new happiness. I do not know much about spiritualism as such, but I feel that the secret of the world is in it. I would not sell that little camera for $1,000,000.

"My daughter was born with a double veil over her eyes. At the age of three she showed that she could see what others could not see. She told us one day just after the armistice that our friend, Harry Schroeder, was changing a ring from one hand to the other. When he came back he told us that he had done so. Isabella told us the day and hour he was going to arrive in this country from France, and it came true.

"At first we scolded her for it and probably interrupted her communication with the spirit world. It may take years for it to come back with full force. She is very nervous and we have never been able to keep her in school."

Mrs. Haug said that no other pictures were taken with the camera.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MUFFLED SHOT

by J. Werner Phelps

THE solution of the Farley murder had seemed as simple as A. B. C. at first, but by the time Barnaby was called in it had slipped along the alphabet of mysteries and then registered somewhere near X.

Briefly: At 2 a. m. of a certain Sunday morning a shot disturbed the tenants of Mrs. Drennan's respectable boarding-house at 114 Wharton street. The first to reach the scene was James Bent, who had been sitting up with his sick buddy of war days in the adjoining room. Bent had found Farley's door wide open, Farley dead on the floor and Doris Gardner, another boarder, standing in a dazed condition and with a still warm revolver in her hand.

Sounds A B C-ish, does it not? And even more so when, as the police easily found out, the murdered man had for weeks been forcing his unencouraged attentions on the girl. But Doris Gardner, through every degree of police questioning, steadfastly, firmly, then hysterically denied that she had fired the fatal shot.

It was the newspapers which discovered that the unassuming little working girl was related the *the* Gardners of Pearson avenue. After this fact received blatant publicity, and more to clear the family name than the girl, Hanson T. Gardner sent for Larry Barnaby, who had done some very clever investigating in the Secret Service during the war, and since then had solved several remarkable criminal mysteries.

Detective Barnaby reached the city early on Tuesday afternoon, went at once to Mrs. Drennan's, made himself known and requested to occupy the room where the tragedy had occurred.

"Now, Mrs. Drennan," he said with a smile that lighted up his rather serious face, "I know you're just aching to tell me the whole story. I'm just in from Washington, and admit I don't know a thing about the details of the murder; haven't even read a newspaper account. But, you see, I have my own peculiar methods of investigating, and I prefer to hear the whole thing in my own way." And he politely but firmly bowed the disappointed landlady out of the room.

After a brief telephone conversation with Chief of Police Howells, Barnaby requested to have Officer Casey, the patrolman on the beat the night of the crime, tell his story.

Casey had stepped into the doorway of Mrs. Drennan's house. It was a wild night, the lightning almost continually illumined the dark cavern of Wharton street, thunder rolled incessantly and rain slapped furiously against the flooded sidewalks. Short-

ly before 2 a. m. Miss Gardner, who worked until 1:30 in the telephone exchange around the corner, came running down the street. She drew back in alarm when she saw some one in the doorway of No. 114, but Casey stepped forward and spoke to her. She then laughed nervously, spoke a word about the storm, and opened the door with her key. A few minutes later, as Casey was about to leave the shelter, he thought he heard a scream. Deciding it was part of the storm, he again turned to step onto the sidewalk, when, in a pause between loud crashes of thunder, the sound of a muffled pistol shot came from behind the door. He tried the door, rang the bell, then, as loud voices came from within, he put his big shoulder against the door, forcing it open. On the second landing he pushed his way through a group of partly dressed boarders, found the body of Farley shot through the heart and Miss Gardner leaning against the wall, a revolver in her hand.

"What was her appearance?" questioned Barnaby.

"One moment she was wild-eyed, the next kind of dazed, looking at the gun, then at the dead man."

"What did she say?"

"Some one—I think it was the landlady or Mr. Bent—asked her why she did it, and she shrieked in wild hysterics."

"But just what did she say, Casey?"

"She kept saying: 'I didn't do it; I didn't have a gun; I didn't do it.'"

"And you felt that she spoke the truth?"

Casey looked puzzled. "At the time I did, yet it sure *looked* as if she had done it," he said slowly.

Barnaby next called Doris Gardner.

It took all his skill to draw out a coherent story from her. She was a rather tall, very slender girl with big dark eyes that gazed with apparent frankness into his. At last, under his patient questioning, she became calm.

"I did hate him," with a shudder. "They all know here how he annoyed me. I would have found another boarding-place, but they are laying off girls at the exchange, and I knew Mrs. Drennan would be good to me if I was out of work."

The kindly blue eyes of the detective smiled encouragingly. "How long have you been here—at Mrs. Drennan's?"

"Almost five years."

"And Farley?"

"He came here about a year ago."

"Did you know this man Farley before he came here?"

She shook her head.

"Did he actually 'make love' to you?"

Doris Gardner's cheeks flushed.

"Yes, he did. There was something loathsome about him to me. I—well, my fiancé was killed in France, and I didn't want this man's attentions."

"Now tell me about Saturday night."

"I was hurrying to my room; I sleep on the third floor, just over this room. Two other girls, Jennie Bemis and Marie Fereno, share the room with me. There was a light downstairs, but the only light in the upper hall came from the turned-down gasjet in the bathroom. I didn't notice Mr. Farley's door was open until he grabbed me as I passed. He drew me into the room, and seemed terribly excited about something. 'I want to tell you a secret,' he said, and I became alarmed at his odd actions."

"Yes?"

"It was dark except for the lightning flashes, and in these I saw his face, and it was terrible. His eyes were blazing and his lips drawn back from his teeth. I made up my mind to get out of there and struggled, but he held me and dragged me across the room, saying I must share his secret. I screamed, then I called to my roommates: 'Jennie! Marie! Help! Help!' I was terribly frightened. I was so filled with terror I think I must have fainted. When I recovered myself the door was open, *he* was on the floor, and that revolver was in my hand."

"Wait a minute." Barnaby leaned forward eagerly. "You said the door was open?"

She looked at him in surprise. "Why, yes," she answered.

"Why did you notice that?"

"Because he, Farley, had closed it as he drew me in."

"Are you sure he had closed it?"

"Yes."

"And equally as sure it was open afterwards?"

"Yes, I am sure."

"This man was alone in the room?"

Doris looked her surprise. "Why, yes, the lightning was very bright. I looked around in terror. I saw no one else."

"And you saw no one when you 'recovered yourself'?"

"No."

"No one passed you that gun?"

"Oh, Mr. Barnaby, I am telling you the truth. I have tried so hard to recall how I got that gun. I was almost dead with fright. There was the thunder and the awful lightning and that wicked face coming closer. Suddenly the world seemed to crash about me; a moment later I fainted, as I told you."

"Please show me just where you were standing when you 'recovered yourself,' as you say."

Doris walked to the wall against which the room door opened. Two-thirds of this wall space was taken up by heavy white folding doors, which were locked and plainly bolted on this side.

"You didn't pick up that revolver, say, from that table over there?"

Doris shuddered back against the wall. "No—oh, no. I wasn't near that table."

"But, Miss Gardner"—Barnaby came close to the girl and his blue eyes suddenly turned a steely gray—"you admit you hated this man; he annoyed, insulted, attacked you. You would have been justified——"

"But I didn't shoot him; I might have, but I didn't, I didn't!" she cried.

"There, there!" Barnaby soothed as the slender body of the girl began to tremble. "I'm satisfied the man got what he deserved, but I'm here to get the facts."

He looked steadily at the girl as she stood leaning against the wall, her frightened dark eyes making her pale face almost ghastly by contrast. But the dark eyes met his steadily. Suddenly he turned and opened the door. "That's all, Miss Gardner; keep up your courage. It's going to come out all right, anyway, for you," and he gave her a brotherly little pat on the shoulder as she passed out.

Mrs. Drennan's story, sifted from its innumerable "side lights," brought out that Miss Gardner was an exceptionally fine girl. She never had any "gentlemen friends" except the young man who went to war. Mr. Bent had openly sought her for a long time, and lately the folks in the house felt that she was beginning to be impressed with him.

"Mr. Bent? Who is he?" Barnaby asked.

"He is one of my boarders, sir. Been with me ten years. He's the one who reached this room first."

"Oh, he did, hey? Where's his room?"

"Upstairs, but he's been sitting up with Mr. Collister, who occupies that room," pointing to the folding doors. "Mr. Collister was his buddy in France, but has been very ill for several weeks now."

Barnaby mused aloud. "So Bent is in love with Miss Gardner, Farley grabbed her, Bent arrives first on the scene——"

Mrs. Drennan's plain, round face showed sudden alarm. "Oh, Mr. Detective, sir, don't you ever think Mr. Bent did this. If he did he'd be telling it, sir. He'd be proud to have gone to a girl's help."

Barnaby smiled at the implied compliment, but he made a mental note of her quick defence of Bent.

"You say Bent has been sitting up with Collister. Just how sick *is* Collister?"

The landlady shook her head sadly. "Very sick, sir; not been able to raise his head for two weeks now. I'm afraid——"

"And that folding-door there?" Barnaby interrupted. "Was that bolted Saturday night?"

Mrs. Drennan turned and stared at the door. "Why, yes, it's never unbolted; these rooms rent separately."

"Thanks. Now please send Mr. Bent in."

Bent, quite a dapper young man, one who wouldn't need to introduce himself as a popular salesman, came breezily in and seemed eager to tell all that he knew. Col-

lister had appeared to be sleeping unusually well on Saturday night, and he guessed he had dozed off himself; that is, between the crashes of thunder. No, he hadn't heard Miss Gardner come in or come upstairs, which was not surprising on account of the storm. He heard the shot and rushed into the hall and into this room.

"You found the door there open or closed?"

"Open."

"Umph!" mused Barnaby aloud, and his keen eyes never left the other's face. "Umph! Kinda strange. Farley to drag a girl in and leave his door open."

Brent's face flushed. "I'm telling you what I saw, Mr. Barnaby," he said shortly.

"You heard no screams? No scuffle?" incredulously.

For the fraction of a moment Bent's eyes dropped. "No, sir. I didn't. As you know, the storm was at its height."

"That's all," Barnaby interrupted.

The other occupants of the house could add nothing helpful.

Collister's and Farley's rooms, which were adjoining but with the bolted folding doors between, opened onto the second floor hall. At one end of this hall, just at the top of the stairs, was the bathroom; at the other end, its door facing the bathroom, was another bedroom. This room extended across the other half of the front of the house, but did not connect with Farley's. It was occupied by an elderly couple, who stopped to put on enough garments after the shot was fired to have given the murderer plenty of time to make his escape. Mrs. Drennan slept downstairs, and was one of the last to awaken. The occupants of the rooms on the third floor were aroused by the excitement rather than by the shot, as whatever they had heard had been ascribed to the storm.

When Barnaby felt he knew all that could or would be learned at the house, he read all the newspaper accounts, called on Chief Howells, glanced over the evidence taken at the inquest, then spent an hour going all over what he had learned.

"There's something wrong in some one's story," he mused. "In all these cases if the whole truth were told by every one there would be no mystery. Casey was at the front door; the police assert that the back door and windows downstairs were found locked. Of course there's the bathroom window. That was probably open. One could swing one's self out, but that was pretty dangerous on a wet night. Bent hears the shot, passes from one room to the next, a distance of surely not more than fifteen feet, yet the murderer has vanished. If Miss Gardner didn't, then somebody *is* lying."

At the dinner-table Barnaby exerted himself to put the occupants of the house at their ease and succeeded after telling several stories of his experience in the Secret Service. But his smiling eyes and quick intuition took in a number of things. There was Bent's forced laugh, for instance. Then there was something to mull over in Mrs. Drennan's repeated defence of the dead man. Had she been in love with Farley herself? Was she jealous of his passion for the younger woman? Or did she love Bent, and was she shielding him? As he measured her she was rather a grim woman, one capable of cool calculation.

Miss Gardner was not at the table.

"I'd like to meet the sick man," Barnaby remarked to Bent as they arose from the table, and a minute later he could scarcely repress an exclamation of pity as he held the wasted hand of the young man in the room adjoining his.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Detective." Collister looked up with an attempt at a grin. "Hope you'll entertain me a little with some of the details of this murder, or any other, for that matter. Darn strange, I call it, that I didn't hear that shot."

Barnaby drew a chair close to the bed, which stood across the folding doors that separated this room from his own. His one glance had taken in the many war trophies about the room, then settled on the sunken cheeks of the young man on the bed.

"They're hauling me off to the hospital to butcher me up a little more," Collister remarked grimly.

"Been sick long?" Barnaby held out his cigarette case.

Collister took a cigarette, but was too weak to light it. He nodded gratefully when Barnaby helped him.

"Spent about half my time in the hospitals since I got back. Guess I'm done for now, although Doctor Boynton, the specialist, you know, says my grit may carry me through. I've been flat on my back here for two weeks, even missed the chance of nabbing that murderer. Don't know what I'd do if Bent here didn't stand by me—or rather sit by me."

Bent pulled up his chair, and Barnaby encouraged a discussion of the crime. Collister had been very weak all day Saturday. He remembered the storm; in fact, it aggravated his nerves, which were "horribly jumpy" at best. He had slept fitfully, waking often to see Bent sitting at the table absorbed in a book. Finally he heard some excitement in the hall, and after repeated calls some of the boarders came in to tell him of Farley's murder.

"And you didn't hear a scream or a shot?" Barnaby looked very keenly into the honest blue eyes of the sick lad.

"No. I did jump a number of times, but I always do that; the least sound starts me, and there was some "artillery barage" that night! A scream or shot? No. Some awfully heavy crashes, then the excitement in the hall."

Barnaby took one of those sudden and complete likings to the plucky young ex-soldier, and from that night spent every moment he could spare beside the boy's bed. He even, when alone with him, discussed the case quite frankly, more perhaps with the idea of diverting the sick man's mind than anything else.

At the end of three days the police, severely criticised by the public and the press for this addition to the number of recent unsolved mysteries, were ready to arrest Doris Gardner on the strength of circumstantial evidence. Barnaby, puzzled but not discouraged, held them off while he tried to ferret out the inconsistency in the stories. On the next morning he woke up with a fullfledged theory in his mind, and he smiled broadly as he dressed, planning out along this new line of thought. After breakfast he visited one of the newspaper offices.

It was right after dinner that night that he received a telephone message, and he turned from the phone with a still broader smile. He left the house at once and made a call at the house whose yard abutted Mrs. Drennan's.

On his return to No. 114 Wharton street Barnaby called Bent into his room. Without a word he passed the salesman a copy of the *Evening Dispatch*. On the front page was a good-sized picture of Bent and one of Doris Gardner with the heading, "Doris Gardner engaged to James Bent."

Bent looked up and found Barnaby gazing at him with a cold, steady stare.

"Well?" said Barnaby.

Bent frowned. "That isn't true; I'm not engaged to Miss Gardner."

"But willing to be?" snapped Barnaby.

Bent was silent.

"What about Miss Dooley?" Barnaby's voice held something that drew Bent to his feet. "You don't need to answer," went on the detective. "Just tell me the truth about Saturday night, or *I will tell you.*" Then, as Bent did not speak: "You weren't at your post of brotherly love all night Saturday, as you claimed. There's an opening through the fence to the yard in back—McAdam's yard. Miss Dooley, the maid there, is a very attractive girl. She says——"

Bent wheeled on him.

"Well, what does she say?"

"That newspaper story was a little bait, of course," Barnaby went on deliberately. "I knew that you lied, Bent. A fellow like you usually has another woman somewhere. I wanted her story. Miss Dooley called me up; I've seen her. Jealousy makes a woman talk. She tells me she called you at midnight Saturday. You left her at 1:45 Sunday morning after promising to marry her."

"That's a lie," snapped Bent, but his cheeks paled.

"Well, you said enough or did enough to make the girl desperate when she found you were fooling her." Barnaby's voice was

like ice as he cast a glance of scorn at the other man.

"Now," went on the detective, "I guess I've got the links connected. You doubtless saw that Collister was sleeping soundly and slipped out the back door, through the fence, to the girl you had been visiting for some time, even while protesting love to Miss Gardner. When you came back——"

Bent's face was chalky as he leaned forward.

"When you came back," went on Barnaby coolly, "you probably heard Miss Gardner scream, rushed in and shot——"

Bent grasped his arm. "I did not; by God, I did not. I'll tell you the truth, Barnaby, but I didn't shoot Farley. As you know the facts, I'll admit that I did go over to see May Dooley. I was sitting up with Collister when the telephone rang near midnight. The McAdams were away, and May got a scare; thought there was some one in the house. Collister was asleep. I slipped out the back door, through the fence and she let me in. I searched the house, then——"

"It didn't take an hour and a half." Barnaby tilted his chair back against the wall, but kept his eyes on the man who was pacing back and forth.

"Well, hang it all, I'm human. May's a pretty girl."

"May—Miss Dooley told me." Barnaby threw a good deal of contempt into his tone. "You left there at 1:45 and came back through the fence?"

"Yes. Then I heard the scream and the shot, and at that was the first one in this room."

"It looks bad, Mr. Bent. If you had told this story at the inquest——"

"But I couldn't."

"No. Miss Gardner would have known of the other girl. You wanted to play safe."

Bent turned a face of utter desperation on the detective. "Mr. Barnaby, I swear I was closing the back door when I heard the scream and had turned the key and pushed the bolt when the shot rang out. When I got up here Miss Gardner held the revolver."

Barnaby gazed steadily into the white face before him. Fright and desperation he read there, but guilt? This man looked no more guilty than Doris Gardner had, yet the officer suspected that he had not told the truth. Was either shielding the other? "You are sure you heard the shot *after* you locked the back door, or did you go down afterwards, leaving a means of escape?" he questioned.

"I was turning the key when I heard the scream."

"But at that the back door had been left unlocked an hour and a half?"

"No. I locked the door. I had the key with me. Mr. Barnaby, whatever you think of me, I did not fire that shot."

Barnaby lighted a cigarete, smoked for a few seconds, then threw it down.

"Mr. Bent," he said curtly, "your morals are none of my business. I'm here to find out who murdered Farley, and I'm going to find out. There are some things I want to verify before taking any action. Now, to prevent your immediate arrest, I will have to ask you not to leave this house for, say, forty-eight hours."

Bent drew in a deep breath.

"All right," he agreed, "and let me help you, Barnaby. My one desire, more than ever now, is to find out who shot Farley."

Barnaby opened the door.

"Good-night," he said coldly.

At nine o'clock that same evening Chief Howells walked into Barnaby's room.

"It's no use, Barnaby," he began gruffly. "The public, through the press, is demanding its pound of flesh. There's too much criticism of the police force already. All the Gardner influence and wealth can't hold us off any longer. I've got to arrest the Gardner woman to-night."

"Not to-night, chief," Barnaby protested. "Give me a few hours more."

"Nope. The evidence is too strong. She did it all right."

Barnaby suddenly made up his mind. "I've got something to tell you, chief." He passed Howells a box of cigars. "Light up; that's it. Now, listen. This man Bent, first at the scene of the murder, was out of the house between 12 and 1:45 that night."

Howells forgot to puff.

"Eh?" he exclaimed. "Out of the house? Where?"

"Visiting a light o' love in the next street back."

Howells laid down his cigar.

"No," he exclaimed; "well, that shifts the spot-light a bit. Out, was he?"

"Came in, he says, and was locking the back door when the shot rang out," went on Barnaby, and he told in detail the new developments.

"I thought he was pretty smooth at the inquest," said Howells. "With all the rest we know that is enough to arrest him. Sure, he heard the *screams*, not the shot."

"Now, chief"—Barnaby offered a handful of cigars—"just hold off till to-morrow. Bent can't leave the house; you men can look after that."

Howells hesitated. "Well, to-morrow afternoon we must show the public some action," he insisted as he arose to go.

For hours Barnaby sat slouched in a big chair, at times smoking furiously, at others staring at the ceiling, his hands clasped behind his head. About two o'clock he heard voices. He opened his door and knocked softly on Collister's.

Bent opened the door.

"Go to bed, Bent," said Barnaby; "I can't sleep, so I'll sit up the rest of the night." He came in and drew the most comfortable chair in the room alongside the bed. Then, as Bent went upstairs: "How goes it, Collister?" he asked cheerfully.

"Rotten, thanks," answered Collister.

"Well, I feel mean, too. I'm going to stretch out here and let's swap yarns for a while. This detecting is tiresome business."

The hours dragged on. Barnaby told many funny and some weird incidents of his career, and Collister, not to be outdone, told some of his own experiences in France. Gradually their voices sank and they both slept—Collister the sleep of exhaustion, Barnaby with a faint smile on his lips.

Saturday started right in to be a busy day. After breakfast Barnaby stepped out to the nearest pay station and called up Chief Howells.

"Give me till to-night, chief," he begged.

"You promised——" began Howells.

"I know. But at midnight to-night I'll turn over the murderer."

"You will—sure?" came back the chief's eager tones.

"Sure thing—at 12 to-night."

On his return to the house he found Hanson T. Gardner waiting for him.

"Hadn't heard from you definitely, Barnaby. How's things?"

Barnaby assured him he felt confident of clearing the Gardner name.

"All right," smiled Hanson T.; "remember—spare no expense."

"I won't," Barnaby assured him. "And, by the way, if you care to you might come here this evening. I'm staging a little denouement that might repay you for—well, for what it's going to cost you."

Later a flock of reporters besieged the house, roosting on the steps, stairs, parlor chairs, anywhere they could find a vacant spot. They seemed to sense that something was about to happen.

Barnaby called them all together.

"Boys," he said, with his friendliest smile, "you're some ten too many. Can't have you under my feet. I'll have room for just one of you at the finale of the case. If you can agree on one who will witness it and give the story to the rest, all right. If not, I won't have any of you in the house."

This caused a good deal of protest and some discussion, but at last Huchins, of the *Eagle*, was selected, and the rest filed dubiously out.

"And now, Huchins," grinned Barnaby, "this is going to be the affair of your young life. But I can't have you around all day. Take the day off; go to the movies. The curtain goes up here about midnight to-night, and not before."

Huchins left.

Barnaby spent a busy day, most of it in town. Early in the evening he had the old-fashioned piano moved from the parlor up to his own room and placed against the folding doors. Then he had a long talk with Doris Gardner.

"To-night I shall want you to re-enact the events of that night," he told her. "At signals, which I will explain, act just as you

did then; scream just as loud, using exactly the same words."

At 11:30 Barnaby's "guests" began to arrive: Hanson T. Gardner, the chief of police, Officer Casey and Huchins. With a word of apology Barnaby placed them in the darkened bathroom, the door of which was at an angle with Collister's. Collister's door was closed. They were cautioned to be very quiet.

The members of the household were requested to keep off the second floor, and they gathered in the third floor hallway, wondering just what was to happen.

At 11:45 Barnaby called up from downstairs another guest—a very tall, rather long-haired young man. He whispered a few last instructions, and this guest went into Farley's old room and seated himself at the piano. Doris Gardner, very pale and nervous, also sat in this room.

Barnaby next put out all the electric lights, leaving a turned-down gasjet in the hall and one in Farley's room. Farley's door was left wide open. With an added caution for absolute silence he went into Collister's room, carefully closing the door. He stood over the bed for a few minutes, assuring himself that Collister was asleep; then he opened the door softly, returned to the head of the bed and from his pocket drew out a flash-light. Holding this high, but well back from the bed, he pressed the button and sent a flash of light across the room, lighting up the doorway and the hall beyond. At the signal the man at the piano ran his fingers softly over the base notes, making a rumbling sound not unlike thunder.

After a moment another flash was followed by an increasingly loud response from the piano. The man on the bed moaned, tossed a little, then lay still. Again Barnaby flashed his light. A louder rumble answered and the sick boy moved restlessly, speaking unintelligibly. The light flashed again, the musician crashed his hands to the keys, rumbling down over the base notes, and the result was so like the roll of thunder that the listeners forgot for a moment that they were watching play-acting.

The flashes were coming faster now and the crashes sharper, louder.

"They're comin'!" called out Collister suddenly, shrilly.

And now there was another sound from the front room: the overturning of a chair, a sobbing moan of fright.

Collister sat up in bed.

Then came a girl's scream: "Help! Oh, God, help!"

Another flash of light, another crash.

Collister, breathing heavily, got out of bed and into his uniform. He stood weakly, tottered, then as another flash was followed by a cry of mortal terror, "Help! Help! Jennie! Marie! Help! Help!" he grabbed a revolver from a holster that hung near the door and rushed into the hall.

Barnaby was close behind him. There was another scream from Farley's room. Collister rushed on, his gun leveled as he turned into Farley's room, and Barnaby snapped on the electric lights.

Collister looked around, dazed. The gun fell from his hand, and he would have fallen had not Barnaby not held him.

"That's all right," Barnaby soothed.

Collister looked about him in blank amazement at the open door into Farley's room, at the faces grouped about him. "Why," he exclaimed, "I—I thought I was in the war again. You remember, Barnaby, that story I told you. I've lived it over many times, especially in a storm at night. That terrible night of fighting, when from the old house I heard that girl scream, 'Help! Help! Jennie! Marie! Help! Help!' I found that devil holding her; I shot him and thrust the gun in her hand, just as the enemy came down the street."

Barnaby turned to Chief Howells. "And that is how Farley met his death, gentlemen. I figured it all out. The chivalry of a half-dazed doughboy led to the tragedy.

A Dangerous Escape

ANY one who has visited the Joliet Prison and carefully noted not only how well the building is adapted for keeping the incarcerated within its walls, but also the system of discipline and guarding which tend to the same end, will be of the opinion that he who succeeds in systematically working his way through the iron and stone work of the place and in evading the eternal vigilence of the guards is no common man. Dave Parker, alias Paddock, was both bold and expert, and his escape from the strong fastness of Joliet Prison was one of the most romantic and remarkable cases of escape from prison and recapture on record. The following is the story of the escape, as told by Parker himself, after his recapture and return to prison:

"To begin at the beginning, it was five months after my arrival at Joliet that I began the work which I hoped was to set me free. The first to be accomplished was securing a few necessary implements, which, under the Joliet discipline, was a very hard matter.

"At last I secured a case-knife, which with the aid of my cell-mate's knife, I converted into a saw. With this saw I managed, after many days, to cut through four bars of my cell door. It was hard work and had to be done slowly and noiselessly. There is no silence like that of a prison at night.

"At last, however, the cell door bars were cut through, and the freedom of the passage was mine whenever I chose to take it."

"But how did you conceal the fact of the bars being cut from the guards?"

"That thing gave me a great deal of trouble. It was necessary, of course, as I had still to effect an entrance to the tower of the prison, which was padlocked, and to cut the bars of the tower window before I got out, that the cell door bars which I had removed should be taken in and out while I accomplished the work in the tower. Taking the bars out, once they were cut through, was an easy matter, but fitting them back again so firmly that the jar of opening and closing the door should not remove one of them, and at once destroy all the work accomplished, was a task. First of all I tried by the insertions of paper between the several ends of the bars, to keep them in place. This would not do at all, however. Then I got some leather and tried that, but that wouldn't work. Finally I packed the ends with cloth fibers, and they worked like a charm. With this packing the bars stood as firmly as if solid, and my means of going in and out of my cell were as perfect as I could desire."

"What did you do then?"

"The night that I finally succeeded in fixing and making secure my door from accident I slipped out and made a tour of investigation of the corridors, which resulted in the determination that the means of escape which I had always considered the most feasible—that by the tower—was the one to be worked. The tower door was secured by a padlock, and I began at once to make a key to fit it."

"How did you set about that?"

"First of all I took an impression of the padlock—a little soap did the work for me. It was terribly hard work, though, making that key. I worked for ten days over that lock and key, sometimes remaining awake for forty-eight hours on a stretch, working for the State all day and for myself all night."

"How did you manage to elude the guard?"

"By being very careful and very patient. Of course the guards come and go irregu-

larly—at least they intend to—but close observation enabled me to form a pretty good idea of when they would be around again after they had once passed my cell. The great danger in this work lies in a man's getting overhopeful and enthusiastic. He gets to work at night and is doing splendidly—so well that the temptation to remain at the post of danger proves too strong; he lingers a moment longer than he ought to, is discovered, and then there is an end of it all. Many a time in working over that padlock I became so excited that it needed the strongest possible effort of the will to enable me to follow the rule I had formed, namely, to stop work always some minutes before I had reason to believe that the guard would be around again. I always managed, however, to get back to the cell in time, and after nearly two weeks' work at the padlock I perfected my key."

"Had you no narrow escapes while working at the tower padlock?"

"No. I followed strictly the rule which I have already referred to, and always had time to spare after I got back to the cell. The entrance to the tower secured, I at once prepared for the escape from the tower window. The arrangement for our escape —for my cell-mate was to go with me—was as follows: Early in the night we were to leave the cell together and go to the tower, which being opened, I was to enter, my cell-mate locking it after me and returning to the cell to await the result of my work. Previous to leaving the cell I arranged a dummy in my bed to satisfy the curiosity of the officer when he made his rounds. This done, we went into the corridor together, gained the tower, which was some forty feet from my cell, and my mate locked me in it, and left. Up to this point everything had worked well. The tower window was about twelve feet from the floor, but there was a staging which enabled me to reach it. Once up there, I brought my case-knife saw into play and began cutting away the two bars which stood between me and the freedom I had been working for for two months so patiently. It was tough work, but after some hours of toil I got the bars sawed through, and then all that was left to do was to cut away the wood-work of the window. This was soon done, and then I remembered the promise I had given to my mate—to let him know when I had finished my task. I made the signal agreed upon—three light taps upon the tower door—but he did not answer. He had evidently gone to sleep. I waited a while and gave the signal again, but it was no use, and I had then to look after my own safety. It was now getting near morning, and as I gained the window again and looked out upon the dull sky the clouds parted and it became suddenly much lighter than I wanted for my purpose. Two guards would soon be out to take their places on the towers, and there was no time to spare. I had wrapped around my body beneath my shirt a rope which I had manufactured out of thread which I had taken from the shoe shop. I lowered myself to the gound safely, and at once struck off for the country, taking an easterly course."

"How were you clad?"

"All the clothes I had on me were a woolen shirt and a pair of striped pants. My head and feet were bare, but I ran as fast as a deer until I reached the cover of the woods, a mile from the prison."

"Did you meet any people?"

"Not at first. I kept out of their way, of course. Towards evening, however, I found a blanket, which I wrapped around me, and which, when I approached anybody, served the purpose of concealing the pattern of my pants, which was, of course, a dead give-away. I spent my first night in a farmer's barn, where I had the good luck to change clothes with a man—he wasn't around at the time—and in ordinary clothes again I felt, of course, much more secure. I made my way to Kankakee, got some socks and boots and a hat and finally worked my way to Cincinnati, from which place, after some time, I communicated with my wife. She objected to my coming to Chicago, and if I had only followed her advice I would never have been recaptured. She wanted me to send for her and move off some distance. I thought I could so disguise myself that I would be safe in Chicago, and I finally went there."

THE MYSTERY OF THE CALVIN WILL

—by Beulah Poynter—

CHAPTER ONE

"COME in!" McManus rasped the words impatiently, laying down a long and detailed report of a particularly unpleasant divorce case, which, against his ethics and better judgment, his office had been compelled to accept.

He swung about in his swivel chair, tossing aside a half-burned cigar, as he saw that his visitor was a young girl, who, stepping timidly across the threshold, seemed to be bringing with her presence a bit of the frosty glow of the snow-driven December morning.

She was tall, with the slenderness of adolescence, and her almost patrician features, shadowed by a turban of gray squirrel fur, were softly rounded and quiveringly sweet. A voluminous wrap of the same pelt covered her from tip to toe, and McManus saw but a few tendrils of the daffodil-colored hair which had fluttered about her pansy eyes, which, wide, frightened and appealing, stared into his own.

Almost awkwardly he sprang to his feet.

The girl consulted a bit of pasteboard she held in one gloved hand. "You are Mr. Reilly McManus?" she stammered.

"Yes. Please be seated."

"You take private detective cases?"

"Yes, that is my business," he smiled, and the girl smiled gratefully in reply. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh, I need help!" she cried half hysterically, dropping into the extended chair and unfastening the clasp of her fur cloak. "I need help badly. Perhaps I am doing wrong in coming to a detective, but I don't know where to turn or what to do, and something must be done immediately or——" She suddenly burst into tears.

McManus looked flustered; he was unused to dealing with women, especially young and pretty ones, and the situation was embarrassing.

"Suppose you tell me what is the trouble, and if I can advise or give you assistance I will do so," he said gently.

The girl swallowed painfully, then after an obvious struggle to attain mastery of herself continued: "My name is Sylvia Dalton; that probably means nothing to you, but I am, or rather was, the ward and niece of Cyrus Calvin."

McManus gave a little start. Cyrus Calvin, but recently dead, had been well known to him as an eccentric exceedingly rich old man, who had been the subject of much

conjecture and newspaper comments for several years before his death, which had occurred less than a month before.

The girl's voice trailed on: "When I was but a little girl both my parents died, and Uncle Cyrus, who loved my mother passionately, being her only brother and many years older than she, took me into his home to become both his ward and heiress. He was a peculiar old man, as you must know, and though in some ways hard and stern, he was always kind and loving to me, and I—I really cared for him. Uncle Cyrus had one son, Truman, a man almost as old as my mother. Years before Truman ran away from home and got into some escapades which nearly broke his father's heart, and for which his father practically disowned him. As years went on and I grew up, Truman made no attempt to mend his ways or win his father's respect, so Uncle Cyrus reared me with the idea that I was to be his heiress. He was very rich, you know. Just before he died he called me to his bedside and told me that even though Truman was his son, and should he have been all that a child should be to him, still he would never have willed his fortune to him, as it was through my father that he, Uncle Cyrus, had become wealthy, and that by legal as well as by moral right I should inherit everything. He informed me that he had made a will leaving everything unconditionally to me and that the will was hidden away, but before he could inform me where this hiding-place was a second paralytic stroke robbed him of speech and movement, and he died, leaving us all in ignorance of where he had placed the document."

"Most unfortunate," murmured McManus.

"Naturally the news of uncle's death was in all the papers, as he was well known and eccentric enough to have been quite a prominent figure. Scarcely had he been buried when there appeared at our home, which is uptown on University avenue, a bronzed, middle-aged man, who claims he is Truman Calvin, Uncle Cyrus's son and, unless the will is found, his heir."

McManus shifted his position, his eyes hidden behind heavy horn-rimmed glasses, gleaming with the sudden interest which inspired him in the girl's narrative.

"This man took possession of the household, and through courtesy itself to me has in every manner made me feel that I am an interloper and that he is the master. The lawyer who drew up the will of which Uncle Cyrus told me, James Jackson by name—maybe you know him—informed him of the disposition of the property and of uncle's wishes, but Truman refuses to believe him, me or any of the witnesses that any such will had been made and demands that we produce it to prove the truth of our statements. This we have been unable to do. Then, to add to everything else, Truman has brought forth another will, which uncle made many years ago."

"A forgery?" interrupted McManus.

Miss Dalton shook her head. "No, I think not, and Mr. Jackson says it looks genuine. It is dated back some fifteen years ago, when I was a child, and it leaves to us, Truman and myself jointly, his entire estate, with this provision—that Truman and I shall marry before my twenty-first birthday if uncle is not alive at the time, or within a year from his death if I am past that age, or the whole estate will be turned over to a charitable organization in which uncle had been interested."

"Has a genuine sound," said McManus slowly. He lighted another cigar and puffed on it for a moment, his black brows almost meeting over the bridge of his aquiline nose as he pondered thoughtfully upon what the girl had just said.

"Yes, I fancy that when uncle made this will he had hopes of Truman reforming, and that in marrying me to him he would make restitution to me and secure my future."

"Did your uncle ever mention this former will to you?"

"No—er—not exactly. He spoke once of a document which he believed he had destroyed, as it had vanished long ago, but he didn't say it was a will. I believe now that Truman, who probably in those days had access to uncle's safe, stole it and kept it for

just such an emergency. The terrible thing is that I am within a week of my twenty-first birthday, and that unless the second will is found or I marry Truman, as uncle demands in the former will, the fortune will go to charity! Truman is determined that I shall marry him and has become so insistent in his demands that I have grown afraid of him. I know he intends to do something, and I am afraid!"

"What is it you want me to do for you?" asked McManus.

"Find the second will, please, please! I'll never marry Truman Calvin! I'd rather die! He's an impossible man, and I loathe him. Uncle knew what he was doing when he disinherited him, and the money is rightfully mine!" She rose, quivering, to her feet, her little face pale with her intense excitement.

"You are positive—absolutely positive—this second will was made?"

"Absolutely! No matter how erratic Uncle Cyrus was, his mind was clear, and he told the truth when he said he had made it. Then Mr. Jackson can back up his statement. Of course the housekeeper, Mrs. Stanton, and his nurse, Lansing, who acted as witnesses to his signature, do not know what was in it, but they can swear it was drawn up legally and signed."

There was a staccato knock on the outer door. Sylvia Dalton looked inquiringly at McManus, and he asked quickly: "Who's there?"

"Kinsey!" answered a ringing voice from outside. "I want to see you, chief!"

"Just a minute. Step inside there, Miss Dalton." McManus opened the door to an inner office and motioned the girl to enter.

"You'll—take my case?" she asked hesitatingly. "You see how imperative it is; how much it means to me?"

He nodded.

"And you'll not keep me waiting long?"

"No longer than necessary."

"Thank you."

He closed the door behind her and called: "All right, Kinsey, come in."

CHAPTER TWO

A YOUNG man in a huge light tan ulster and a soft gray hat breezed into the office and sprawled easily in the leather-cushioned chair the girl had just vacated. He had laughing brown eyes, a wide mouth, determined chin and a well-cut jaw, not exactly handsome; his face possessed a wholesomeness more pleasing than mere physical attractiveness, and his smile, exposing wide, rather uneven but very white teeth, compelled one in return.

"Well, what's up?" asked McManus.

"A lot. What do you know about this?" Kinsey laid a paper bill of ten-dollar denomination on the desk before his chief and leaned back, thrusting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat.

McManus lifted the bill, examined it closely, turning it over a couple of times, then looked quizzically at the young man. "Counterfeit?"

"You've said it, but it's a good one."

"Yes, I'll say so. Where'd you get it?"

Kinsey chuckled. "From a bird who looked as though he ought to be wise enough not to try to pass a bill like that on a dick, or be able to recognize one when some one tried to pass it off on him."

"Yet you accepted it."

"Sure. I've heard of these bills, and didn't object to getting my hands on one. I was standing on the corner of Broadway and Forty-second street waiting for the cop to give me a chance to cross, when a taxi drew up to the curb and a man alighted; not a bad-looking sort, kind of Western-appearing, tanned skin, etc. He couldn't make the right change, and neither could the driver, and he turned to me. 'Maybe you can, brother,' he says to me, and holds out this ten-dollar bill. I could change it and did, though it had hardly got in my mitt when I knew by the feel of it that it wasn't on the level. I gave him ten one-dollar bills in exchange, and he beat it into the Longacre Building."

"Hem! And got away from you!"

"Not exactly. I'd know him again in a million; if he's a sucker, all right; if he's a crook, I'll get him."

"Since when did you enter the Government employ?" McManus asked casually, but his tone made the other flush to the tips of his reddish brown hair. "Hunting counterfeiters is Secret Service work and not the duty of private detectives."

"Well—you know—I thought maybe you'd be interested in getting this new bunch of counterfeiters; there's a big reward out for their capture, and I'd like to be star operator."

McManus grunted. "I've got a new job for you just now."

"Another divorce case? Nix on the pussy-footing love-birds!" Kinsey shrugged disgustedly.

"No, a search for a missing will."

"Melodramatic stuff! Send Miss Fallon. I'm itching for some real adventure."

McManus laughed. "This promises to have more than adventure unless I'm mistaken; suppose you listen to details before you jump at conclusions."

Briefly he narrated to the other what Sylvia Dalton had told him, and through clouds of cigarette smoke Norman Kinsey listened, a trifle bored, infinitely more interested in the counterfeit bill in his possession.

"Well," he said when McManus had finished, "you're the doctor; if you say you're going to take the case and put me on it I'll do my darnedest, but, frankly, it looks like a wild-goose chase to me. Have you talked figures with the young lady?"

"No," admitted McManus grudgingly; it was his time to blush.

"She must be a pippin!" whistled Kinsey, eyeing his partner suspiciously.

McManus stepped to the door of the inner office and called: "Miss Dalton, come out now, please."

Norman Kinsey was a level-headed young Irish-American, who prided himself on his absolute immunity to the wiles of the fair sex, but he capitulated utterly before the tremulous charms of the young girl, who, stepping into the dusty office, seemed to lift the unloveliness from the black leather and mahogany furniture, the frayed red grosgrain rug, and the soot-covered windows.

Hesitant, she glanced from one man to the other, and McManus hastened to introduce his junior partner and chief operator, Norman Kinsey, to her.

"Then—you will help me?" she whispered.

"Sure," said Kinsey heartily, "but how to go about it; that's the question."

"Truman Calvin must not know I've engaged detectives," she said; "I don't know what he would do if he learns of it—maybe something awful. I daren't leave the house on University avenue, in case he should find the will and destroy it, so——"

"I have it!" exclaimed Kinsey, after pacing the narrow length of the room for a moment. "Does this Calvin chap know much about your social life, friends, and so on?"

"Nothing at all. Until two weeks ago, after uncle's funeral, he hadn't seen me since I was about five years old."

"Immense. Then supposing—— You have been virtually the mistress of your uncle's home for years, I take it?"

"Yes, ever since I've been large enough to take care of the household duties."

'Then supposing you spring me on this cousin of yours as a lover from out of town—Philly, Chicago, any old place you choose—and have me pay you a week-end visit, which can be extended or shortened until we find the will!"

Sylvia's face flooded with color, but she smiled bravely. "Yes—es," she said doubtfully, "but I've never had a lover; he might not believe me and suspect who you are."

"That's that!" sighed Kinsey.

"You can act! Can't you?" snapped McManus. "The idea is a good one and, as far as I can see, the only logical way to take a stranger into your home. If the will is to be found, Kinsey, or whoever takes the case, has to have access to the house."

"I'm quite willing to do anything you say," murmured the girl.

"Then it's settled. Get ready your soup and fish, Kinsey, and report at Miss Dalton's home some time to-night or in the morning, just as she desires, and try to act like lovers, both of you."

"Thank you!" Sylvia grasped his hand.

"Now, buck up, little lady," McManus said heartily. "You're not going to marry this Calvin, and you're not going to lose your inheritance, for if there's a will to be discovered old Kinsey here will find it!"

"I know it!" she whispered, her eyes luminous, her chin quivering. "You are so kind I feel worlds better now!"

"Go home and prepare Calvin for the pleasure he is going to have in meeting your new lover, and when Kinsey arrives play up to the sweetheart thing strong. Now suppose you give us your address and telephone number."

CHAPTER THREE

THROUGH the blinding snow of a late December storm the street lights flickered pitifully, and pedestrians, with coats whipping about their limbs and collars covering their chins, struggled bravely through the wind-driven streets. Umbrellas turned inside-out by the gusts tearing around the corner were whisked upward and out of reach. Hats blown from less careful owners' heads were trampled under horses' hoofs or automobile tires, and were ruined irrevocably.

A black-and-white taxi, speeding recklessly on a sleet-covered pavement, all but collided into a huge touring car as, turning into the Concourse at 181st street, the driver paid little heed to the up-and-down traffic.

The owner of the touring car cursed the driver of the taxi, and the lone passenger in the latter, leaning forward with the door open, added his maledictions to those of the motorist.

"What are you trying to do?" he roared above the sound of the wind and the hum of passing machines. "D'ye want to send us all to perdition, you fool?"

"Say, if you don't like the way I drive, take another taxi!" retorted the red-faced, purple-eared individual as he blew on his almost bleeding frost-bitten hands. "It's blamed cold out here. Any bloke is a *fool* to take a trip so far uptown on a night like this."

"I quite agree with you," said the passenger in a more amiable tone of voice, "but so long as you consented to drive me to my house, at least you might attempt to get me there alive and whole instead of in pieces."

"Aw, quit your worryin'. I like my own skin as well as you do yours, and I ain't itchin' for the graveyard yet."

The passenger sank back in the taxi seat, redolent of stale tobacco and innumerable perfumes, and, striking a match, lighted a pipe, whose odor, mingled with the others, was scarcely more fragrant. In the brief illumination caused by the lighted match one could see that he was a tall, compact man, probably in his middle forties, with stubby black hair, just beginning to turn gray at the temples, and in the "cowlick" on the low, rather receding forehead. He had deep-set eyes, indefinite as to color, but the shaggy pepper-and-salt eyebrows shading them gave one the impression that they were black. His skin was swarthy and leathery-looking, as though it had been burned and parched by many years' exposure to sun, and wind, and blowing sand. A drooping mustache covered his lips, but did not hide the bulldog determination about his chin nor the hint of cruelty in his full red lips.

The taxi skidded, then came to a sudden stop with a bang as the tires crashed against the curb before a large, dimly lighted house (a grayish black in the snowy night) set on a terrace some half-dozen steps or so above the street. A high stone fence hid the lower portion of the garden from view, and there was a high iron gate with a padlock at the entrance, and above it hung a light in a red-tinted lantern, throwing a shadow like that of a splotch of blood on the snowy pavement.

The man in the taxi alighted, consulted the meter and, drawing off his gloves, pulled a well-filled wallet from his pocket. He extracted a bill of ten-dollar denomination and handed it to the chauffeur.

"H——! Is that the smallest you've got?" murmured that worthy.

"Yes, or I wouldn't have given it to you."

The taxi driver fumbled about in the outer pocket of his sheepskin coat and finally produced a five-dollar bill and handed it to the man. "That's all I got," he said.

"You may keep the change," said his fare coolly.

"Piker!" the driver exclaimed under his breath as the other, extracting a key from his pocket, inserted it in the padlock and vanished through the open gate. The charge on the meter was $4.90. The driver's tip was ten cents!

Truman Calvin opened the door leading into the great dark hallway, and for a second stood motionless on the heavy velvet with which it was carpeted. An unusual sound had greeted his ears—a girlish, trickling laugh coming from a room on his right, under whose casement a thread of light indicated that it alone of the great, almost empty house was illuminated and occupied.

He stepped cauticusly, stealthily toward the door and, leaning against its jam, listened for a sound. In the four weeks he had been a tenant in that house, an unwelcome guest, silence and gloom had prevailed within. The funereal air had not been dissipated with the removal of his father's dead body. Now his cousin's girlish laughter penetrating the thick panels of the drawing-room made him curious, baffled.

A low mumble of voices followed the outburst of laughter. He detected a man's monotone, and unable to overcome his desire to see who was in the room, he flung open the door and stepped inside,

Sylvia Dalton sprang to her feet. In the reddish glow of the blazing furnace log her pale-colored hair was an oreole of amber beauty; a soft black frock, in deference to the dead, but accentuated the delicate pink-and-white waxness of her face and bare shoulders and arms.

Truman Calvin drew a deep breath.

Out of the shadow a young man, who had been sitting on a deep-cushioned velvet divan, appeared. He stood straight, clean-limbed, almost aristocratic in his dinner jacket, and the smile with which he greeted the intruder was unabashed, pleasant and not without cordiality.

"Truman," Sylvia said a trifle hesitantly, "Truman, this is my fiancé, Norman Kinsey. My cousin, Truman Calvin!"

"Your what?" gasped Calvin, as though suddenly struck a blow in the face.

"My fiancé; he has come to spend the week-end with me and——"

"You've no fiancé but me!" interrupted Calvin, his face convulsed with rage and livid with passion. "I said I was going to marry you, and I'll keep my word. Tell your friend to pack his belongings and get out of this house, and be quick about it!"

"Truman!" Sylvia's tones, low but imperative, seemed to arrest him. Though a full head shorter than the man she faced, she seemed to have grown taller, queenly in her indignation. "How dare you address me or my guest this way? This is my house as much as yours, by either will! Please remember that if I choose to bring *any one* here I'll do it! Apologize to Mr. Kinsey."

"Sorry!" mumbled her cousin. "I forgot myself. I apologize," and he stumbled out of the room.

The girl turned helplessly to the young operator.

"He—he'll be your enemy forever!" she quavered. "God knows what steps he'll take now!"

"He loves you," said Kinsey slowly, "and I can't help feeling sorry for the poor devil."

———

CHAPTER FOUR

THE room Sylvia had assigned the young detective was on the third story of the house in a sort of turret. Mrs. Stanton, the housekeeper, a tall, raw-boned New England woman who had been in the household since Sylvia as a little girl had come to live with her uncle, had shown him the way to it, up two twisting, circular flights of stairs, and had apologized for it as she did so.

"Everything's mightily upset here now, sir," she said; "what with searching for the

missing will and Mr. Calvin's death, a body don't know where she's at. The guest rooms are on the floor below, but the lawyer has ordered them kept closed on account of hunting for the will, and Mr. Truman has the back rooms and Miss Sylvia the front."

"And where were Mr. Cyrus Calvin's own quarters?" Kinsey asked, giving his own chamber a cursory glance.

The housekeeper, who was inclined to be loquacious, perhaps because of being silent so long in the big house, replied readily: "On the first floor; he had a den just off the drawing-room, and his bedroom adjoined it; he couldn't climb stairs much the past five years, and moved down there when the steps got too much for him."

"In that case," said Kinsey casually, "why are all the rooms below closed up. If Mr. Calvin could not climb the stairs, it's hardly plausible that he could conceal the will in rooms a flight above."

"The will was made before he got took so bad," answered the woman.

She closed the door after her, and Kinsey heard her heavy footsteps as she clumped down the stairs.

There were no electric lights in the room, but a huge gas chandelier over his head furnished sufficient light to show him very plainly his surroundings—a great, high-ceilinged room with shadowy corners and several doors which intrigued his interest. The first he opened, half hidden by the head of an old-fashioned mahogany bed, led into a small dark stairway which he fancied had its beginning in the kitchen or pantries on the lowest floor. A mouldy, unusual smell greeted his nostrils with the chilly air wafted upward. He closed the door quickly and turned to another on the same wall about four feet away. On opening it he saw the interior of a very large square closet, with long poles to be used for hanging clothes; over these were several empty shelves.

"Nothing here," he muttered, and crossing to the opposite side of the room, opened the other door. He had a brief struggle before it swung open, but rather to his surprise saw that it led into a small entirely empty room without window or light. "Just another closet," he said in disappointment.

There was a fire in the great red stone fireplace, and he turned off the light and drew a large, red, upholstered easy-chair up before the fire and, seating himself, leaned back into its depths, and with his hands clasped behind his head stared into the gleaming coals, while he pondered over the story that Sylvia Dalton had told him, the strangeness of Truman Calvin's actions and his surroundings.

It was after twelve o'clock, and the quiet all about, the warmth of the room, made him drowsy; he found his head was drooping sleepily, and was startled a little later to find that he had fallen asleep.

He sprang to his feet and stood hesitant a moment, wondering what had caused him to awaken so suddenly; then on tiptoe he dashed to a window which opened onto the back of the house into a sort of garden.

The storm had subsided, and the ground was now mantled with a thick layer of fleecy white, upon which the cold blue of a newly arisen moon cast a silvery glow, making the landscape almost as bright as day. In this light Kinsey saw a dark shadow emerge from behind the fence of the enclosure, then another and another. Men they were he could tell by their greatcoats muffled to their ears and their long, swinging stride, though they walked stealthily as though fearful of making a noise and awakening any of the sleeping inmates of the house. As he stood there wondering who these nocturnal visitors were and what they wanted, he heard a piercing scream—a woman's cry of abject terror—coming from some place within the house, from one of the lower floors. He whirled about to go to the door, when he heard a second scream, this time from the garden below, and looking out again he saw a fourth figure, also muffled from head to foot in a long dark coat, dart from a hidden doorway toward the three incomers. The last figure held a black, struggling bundle in his arms, and it was from this mass of cloth and fur the terror-stricken cries issued.

"Sylvia!" exclaimed Kinsey and dashed for the door leading into the hallway, but

when he tried to open it he found he could not do so. It was locked from the outside.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYLVIA, after Kinsey had left her for the night, paced the floor restlessly for some little time, the scene with her cousin having unnerved her. A feeling of impending evil held her in its grip. Instead of feeling safer with the detective in the same house, she was more uneasy, certain that she had precipitated the climax which was inevitable that now, whatever sinister plans Truman Calvin had behind his black brows, he would not hesitate to use and sooner than he had intended.

She tramped back and forth over the thick rug, her footsteps noiseless. She found that she was shivering. The fire was dying out and the room had grown chilly. At last, with a little sigh, she lowered the gas and slowly mounted the one flight of stairs to her room above.

It was a cozy little chamber, all chintz and cretonne and ivory-gray furniture, with little feminine touches everywhere characteristic of the girl herself. She dropped into a chair before her dressing table and began to slowly comb out the thick, wavy masses of her yellow hair. Suddenly she smiled at her mirrored reflection in the glass, and resting her elbows on the polished wood before it, for the moment forgot her worries, expectant danger, in a rosy dream of a pair of laughing brown eyes and a musical voice which had surely held more than a professional interest in their glance and tones.

"Kinsey certainly is a splendid actor," she murmured, "or he wouldn't dislike to be my lover in reality."

She rose leisurely and, slipping into a soft pink eiderdown robe, flung herself on the bed and lay for some time listening to the moaning of the wind as it beat against the frosted windowpanes, the distant rumble of the elevated and the crunch of wheels on the snow of an occasional passing taxi. Then she dropped into a heavy, dreamless slumber.

The clock struck one, two, then the hall door was cautiously pushed open; first the barest trifle, as though the intruder wished to make certain the room's occupant was asleep, then boldly flung wide upon its hinges. A tall man in a black astrakhan coat and a soft cap stepped over the threshold. He glanced uneasily at the sleeping girl, then stepped towards the bed, bending over her.

Sylvia never moved, her rhythmic breathing continued unbrokenly. The man stooped, and gathering her, blankets and comforters and all, lifted her bodily in his arms. It was then Sylvia stirred and gave her first scream.

The man drew the covers over her mouth, stifling the cry, and whispered hoarsely: "Shut up! You aren't going to be hurt!"

As though her weight was no more than a child's, he sprinted toward the door, down the long dark hall, down a flight of stairs and into the moon-lighted courtyard.

Half smothered, choking, fear-driven, she felt herself carried through the yard out into the street and flung into a machine waiting at the end of a blind alley. She tried to hear what was being said as the engine back-fired and snorted before going into third speed, but the coverings, which acted as a gag, served to deaden all sound also.

She was conscious of tearing madly through the streets, but when an hour later she was lifted out of the machine and carried inside of a dark tumble-down shanty a mile off the Westchester Road, she was unconscious and oblivious to all that was said and done.

At twelve o'clock that same night in a pool-room downtown Mike Grogan, taxi driver, was cursing in no uncertain manner the fact that he had been fleeced out of five dollars, for when he had offered to pay his check with a ten-dollar bill, which earlier in the evening he had accepted as cab fare, he had been informed it was counterfeit!

"Darn his pelt. I'll get him if he lives in that joint where I took him! But a fat chance I've got of him livin' there!"

CHAPTER SIX

AT first Kinsey used all effort silently to open the locked door, but as he heard the machine below driving away he called lustily and began to beat on the panels! Several times he cried out, and his voice echoed through the house as though it were empty. After what seemed an eternity to the frantic man he heard footsteps down the hall; then a masculine voice outside his door inquired: "What's the row in there?"

"Unlock this door and I'll tell you," snapped the detective.

"Unlock!" in surprised, suave tones. "Unlock it yourself, the bolt is on the inside!"

"Some one has locked it on the outside! Open this door and be d—— quick about it!"

"Surely, but I don't understand!" The footsteps moved away.

"Hurry! Hurry!" exclaimed Kinsey. "There's some treachery going on here, and we're wasting time."

A moment later he heard a key turn in the lock, and upon opening the door he faced Truman Calvin! Sylvia's cousin was in a bathrobe and bedroom slippers, his hair was ruffled and his eyes swollen as though he had been wakened out of a sound sleep.

"If you'll explain this outrage!" Kinsey cried, staring at him incredulously.

"I think the explanation should come from you!" drawled the other, but there was a dangerous glint in his small black eyes. "You rouse the house in the middle of the night with howls of help, and when I wake up and come to you I find nothing at all the matter."

"Nothing the matter! Sylvia Dalton has been abducted. That's nothing! Didn't you hear the scream?"

"I did not!"

"Where's the housekeeper or the butler? Some one must have heard her!"

"If she *screamed!* I think you've been having a nightmare, my man, or letting your *detective* imagination run away with you!"

"I suppose I imagined that my door was locked."

"You probably snapped the Yale lock yourself when you came in to-night," retorted the other.

"We won't argue about that now! We've got to save Sylvia before it's too late."

"Rot! Sylvia's asleep, I tell you."

"I'll see for myself! Have you got a car? That machine drove uptownwards, and if we hurry we may catch it!"

For a second Truman barred the doorway, his huge figure towering over the slighter one of the detective. The two men glared into each other's eyes, then the former stepped aside.

"I'd advise your seeing if Sylvia is in her room before you go chasing around after strange automobiles at this hour," he said slowly, but with meaning.

Kinsey wavered. There was a ring of sincerity in the man's voice. "I'll go to her room," he said, "if you'll show me where it is."

"I'll see you in ——" He controlled himself. "All right, come along."

At the door on the first landing Truman stopped abruptly. "Yours the consequences," he said dryly. "I shan't waken her, you'll have to!" and he walked away. Kinsey waited until his tall figure in its loose flapping robe disappeared in the shadows of the corridor, then he knocked on the door. There was no reply. He knocked again a little harder; then he boldly opened the door and stepped inside. The room was in darkness, but through the pale light filtering through the unshaded window he saw the distinct outline of a bed, a bureau and some chairs. On the bed was stretched a figure. He heard a gentle breathing as of some one asleep. Almost convinced and yet puzzled that Sylvia, the real heiress and more than daughter to a man as rich as Cyrus Calvin, should occupy such small and cramped quarters, he took a chance and struck a match, lighted a gasjet just by the doorjamb.

There was a woman asleep on the bed, but her hair was gray and she was middle-aged! The person sleeping as though under the effects of a strong drug was Mrs. Stanton, the housekeeper.

(*Continued in our next issue*)

Tracing a Decoy Letter

MR. C. B. BARRETT, once Chief Inspector of the United States Secret Service, had a queer experience in a beautiful little town way down in Maryland. Mr. Barrett's long experience with this sort of work had taught him just how to dig a pit for the game, and as the train neared the village he walked through the smoker into the mail car, asked for the mail clerk, showed his commission and said he had something which he wanted done.

"What is it?" asked the clerk nervously, eyeing the chief inspector.

."Where is the mail pouch you throw off at the next stop?"

It was produced.

"Open it."

It was opened, for an inspector has absolute authority not only over mail clerks, but over the postmasters of the largest cities.

"Here is a letter." said Mr. Barrett, "addressed to James Lancaster, a fictitious name. The letter contains a ten-dollar bill. I want you to examine it, take the address, put it in that pouch, and lock it with your own hands."

All this was done, and Mr. Barrett went back to his seat in one of the day coaches, confident that the next move in the game would answer his expectations.

The secret service agent stood upon the platform of the mail car when the train stopped and the pouch was thrown off, when he at once stepped to the platform. A boy, whose business it was to carry the mail, took the pouch over his shoulder and started up the village street, never dreaming that a chief inspector of the postal service was following him on the other side of the street and was watching him like a hawk, while seeming to watch nothing. It was a beautiful June day, the birds were singing, and although it was high noon the leafy, lofty trees lining the quiet street cast such deep, cool shadows that Mr. Barrett did not find walking unpleasant. For about a quarter of a mile the boy kept on, followed by the inspector, and then turned into a small frame building, with a white-and-black sign over the door, labeled "Post Office."

"Now," said Mr. Barrett inwardly, "my letter has reached its destination."

There was a crowd of visitors inside of the little post-office and outside who swarmed toward the desk "to get their mail," and Mr. Barrett waited some fifteen minutes, until they had all gone, before he entered the place, and saw a handsome girl about 17 years old, dressed in an old-fashioned bodice and light-colored skirt, sitting behind the wire grating in a rocking-chair sewing.

"Is there a letter here for James Lancaster?" said the inspector, and every one who knows his face and figure will not wonder that the girl took him for a well-to-do countryman.

"No," she said, after sorting some letters in a case marked "L."

"Won't you look again?" and she did look, but with no better result.

"I am sure the letter must have come," said Mr. Barrett.

"It's not here."

"Are you the postmaster?"

"No, I am the assistant. My father is the postmaster."

"Who opened the pouch that came by the last train?"

"I did."

"No one to help you?"

"No, sir."

The girl's bright eyes looked as innocently at Mr. Barrett as any girl's bright eyes ever looked at any man.

"Maybe it stuck in the pouch. I've heard of such things," he said. "Won't you look?"

She took the pouch, turned it upside-

down, shook it, and looked inside. No letter.

"Won't you let me come in and help you look for it?" said Mr. Barrett.

"No. No one is allowed in here."

The chief inspector drew from his pocket his commission from the United States Government, with its official signatures and seals, and showed it to the girl, asking, as she read it: "Can I come in now?"

"Yes," blushing; "I beg your pardon."

"You did perfectly right, my child," said the venerable agent of the secret service.

There was a board partition six feet high beyond the wired window, and a gate in the end of this partition, toward which the postmaster's daughter went, but Mr. Barrett thought she moved very slowly. At last she turned the key in the lock, opened the solid gate, and admitted the inspector. He walked a few feet and looked around.

There was nothing in sight but bare deal shelves and the letter boxes, and he knew his mission was not there.

"I mailed a letter myself to James Lancaster," he said at last. "That is a fictitious name, 'Lancaster' being my mother's maiden name. The letter was put in that pouch by the mail clerk on the train, who took a memorandum of it and locked the pouch in my presence. When that pouch was put off at the station I followed it and kept it in sight until it was taken into the post-office. Now you say you opened it alone, that no one else touched it. Where is my letter?"

"I never saw it, sir. If you doubt me you can search me."

Mr. Barrett said he would not do that, and that he had never done such a thing to a woman, and he began to pace the floor in deep thought. The girl, more beautiful than ever in her excitement, sat down in the rocking-chair, crossed her limbs and began to rock. The inspector paced the floor in deep thought.

"Call your mother and she can search you in my presence," said he at length.

"My mother is dead."

Again the secret service agent paced the floor. He looked into an adjoining room, brightly and neatly furnished, and wondered whether the girl could have secreted the letter there while she pretended to be going toward the gate to let him in. As he paced back and forth he noticed the swinging feet of the postmaster's daughter, that one of her stockings had sagged down and that under the stocking was the shape of an envelope.

"Your stocking has dropped," he said.

The girl turned scarlet and white, and stopped rocking. She caught her breath, as if to faint.

"Now give me my letter," said the inspector.

She took it from its hiding-place, handed it to him and burst into a flood of tears.

The decoy letter, as is usual in cases of this sort, had been fixed so that it would be apparent to any one that money was inclosed. It had done its work.

"Where is your father?" asked Mr. Barrett.

"In the garden," sobbed the girl.

Mr. Barrett went out into the garden, found the old man hoeing, and brought him in, and when he was told all he bowed his white head and sobbed with his child. The inspector learned that the girl had admirers, as was natural; that her father was very miserly, not giving her even the money needed for a bright bit of ribbon, a new hat, or a new dress; that she had been tempted to take money from the mails for bits of finery, and had done so. Mr. Barrett bitterly accused the old man of being the one to blame, and he acknowledged it.

"I suppose you will arrest her?" said the girl's father.

"Will you make restitution of the sum (it was about $10) she has taken on account of your miserliness?"

"Yes. Here it is," and it was handed over. "Will you arrest her?"

"If I did what would be her future? No. Unless you or she tells this, it will never be known in the village."

Inspector Barrett left after forcing the old man to promise his daughter should never be compelled or allowed to handle the mails again; and when he submitted his full report to the head of the department at Washington his course was fully approved.

A Nervy, Cool-Headed Detective

"I HAVE had some close calls with bootleggers in my time," said a Canadian officer at Calgary, N. W. T. "I never had to shoot one yet." After a moment's pause he continued: "One of the most desperate men I ever arrested for having whisky in his possession was a guy named Blank. It was in the fall. He had a four-in-hand load of whisky, gin and brandy that he was running across the border, and he and his partners were both riding in the wagon, Blank having no saddle-horse. This cargo was all he possessed in the world, and he knew that if he was caught he could not pay a fine of $400, for this was his second offense, and, of course, his four horses, wagon and liquor would be confiscated. When I first caught sight of them they were about three miles off, and I at once rode toward them to see who they were. As soon as they saw that I was after them they whipped their horses to a gallop, but my horse was fresh and a fast runner, and before they had gone far it was plain to see that I was gaining fast on them. As soon as Blank saw this he stopped, cut off the leaders, and mounting one of them, galloped off; but by this time I was within half a mile of the wagon.

"When I rode up alongside I saw at a glance that it contained whisky, and also that the man who remained with it was not its owner. I dismounted and made him a prisoner, telling him to remain there with the wagon until I returned. 'Look here, stranger,' said he, 'don't follow that man; he won't be taken alive. He is armed with a Winchester and a Colt's revolver, and to prove to you that he won't be taken alive I'll tell you who he is. It's Blank.'

"'That's the very man I want,' I answered, as I jumped on my horse and put the spurs to him and rode after the fugitive. I caught up to him about half a mile farther on in a coulee, where he had dismounted and was trying to hide. I galloped so fast, and pulled up so quiet, that, in stepping back to avoid my horse, he caught his heel in a creeper and fell. Before he could regain his feet I had dismounted and covered him with my revolver. He sprang to his feet and tried to draw his. I laid my hand on his shoulder, telling him that he was my prisoner, at the same time holding my gun close to his head. He told me to shoot and be cursed, and at the same time sprang forward, so that the barrel of my pistol caught him on the temple, tearing a deep gash back into his scalp.

"His revolver was a Colt's 45 single-action, and therefore it required to be cocked before it could be fired. By this time it was drawn, and he attempted to cock it. I caught hold of the hand in which he held it and turned it to one side, and at the same time told him that I would count ten, and if he did not drop his pistol when the number was counted I would blow out his brains. He called out: 'Blow away.' I counted up to nine and pressed the trigger so that the hammer rose, and on seeing this he dropped his weapon and gave himself up. I got him mounted on his horse and brought him back to the wagon. The other prisoner was gone.

"Of all the men I ever arrested this was one of the most desperate. If I had given him the least chance he would have shot me. On the other hand, had I been in the least excited, I should have shot him.

"A good many men would have lost their heads under such circumstances and pulled the trigger.

"What puzzled me most is that when he ran with such force against my revolver when my finger was pressed against the trigger it didn't go off and shoot him, but luck was with him."

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
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101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
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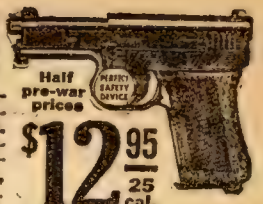

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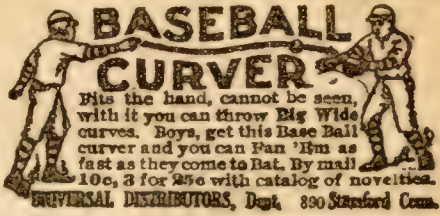

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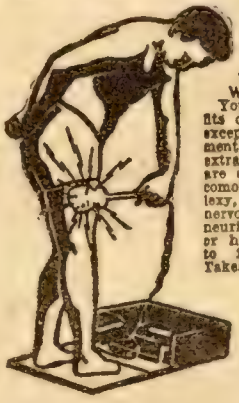

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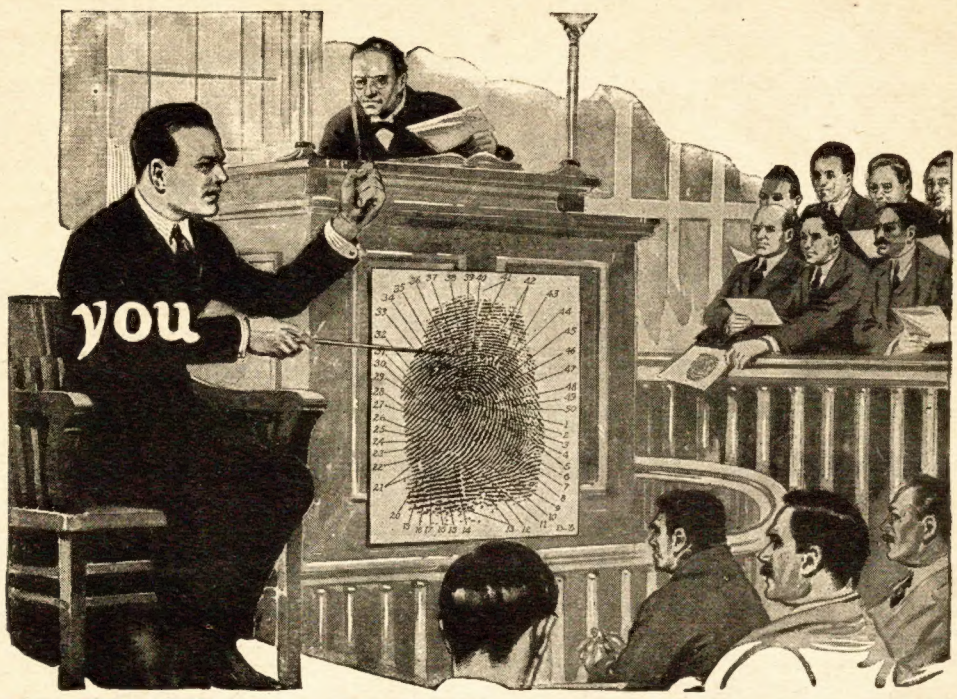

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